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The donkey that roared

TEN PAGES OF SPORT

The timebomb on Italy's sunshine coast

PLUS MORE COMMENT, ARTS, SHOPPING, TRAVEL & 7-DAY TV

Top hats and pearls

LADIES' DAY AT ASCOT

A football-crazy nation gears down for Blank Monday

BY JANINE GIBSON

THE MONDAY morning sickie is likely to hit epidemic proportions next week when millions take time off work to watch England's opening World Cup game against Tunisia.

As businesses grapple with Blank Monday - things are worse in London where there is an Underground strike - BBC insiders estimated that at least

16 million sets will be tuned in at 1pm for its live coverage.

At least one employer made a pre-emptive strike. Ford has threatened its 30,000-strong, predominantly male workforce that anyone "chucking a sickie" faces disciplinary action.

Oddly, production ceased yesterday at its largest plant, Dagenham, Essex, due to an unexplained shortage of key components and it appears

production may be affected for a couple of days.

Workers in London will have an added incentive to stay at home on Monday, as Tube workers begin a two-day walk-out on Sunday night.

Flyers in London Underground's staff areas read: "Relax, put your feet up and watch the football courtesy of (transport union) the RMT."

Hundreds of construction

workers on the Jubilee Line Tube extension, which is months behind schedule, have hit the jackpot. They are being paid not to work on Monday afternoon after contractors Drake and Skull reportedly felt that staff returning from watching the game in the pub could be a safety nightmare.

The more realistic firms are being creative in an attempt to lure staff into the office. Many

are installing televisions or radios, some even inviting in clients to watch in hospitable comfort.

But it seems the best chance of workplace footy is if your company happens to be backing the tournament. Hewlett Packard and BP, both sponsors of France 98, have both installed television screens in their staff restaurants.

Sainsbury has gone one step

further by introducing theme clothing - staff will be sent polo shirts and caps to celebrate sport at work and can watch the match on a rota basis.

Advertising agency Ogilvy and Mather has allocated a room with a large-screen television. There is even a bar for the evening games.

Even year 5 at Our Lady and St Joseph RC Primary School in London - who, it appears, have

a very understanding teacher - will be watching the match.

Labour MPs have exercised their initiative and clubbed together not only to buy a widescreen television but also to hire a Commons committee room complete with food and drink. For the bargain price of only £50 each, the 60 MPs will be assured private viewing and after the tournament there will be a second-hand widescreen

set on offer in Westminster, if anyone is interested.

The Association of British Chambers of Commerce, which has muttered darkly about losses in revenue, is leading from the front. As its annual conference is scheduled to begin in Birmingham on Tuesday, delegates are being encouraged to arrive a day early - doubtless to sit in their hotel rooms working industriously.

Japan crisis shakes world

BY HAMISH MCRAE

JAPAN, THE world's second-largest economy, confirmed yesterday that it has plunged into recession, sparking fears of a global market meltdown that could drag the West into economic decline.

Markets throughout Asia slumped after Japan announced that output had fallen for the second consecutive quarter - the classic definition of recession. The London stock market also got the jitters as £18bn was wiped off share values and the FTSE 100 index suffered one of its biggest two-day falls this year.

Inevitably, there is a worry that if the world's second-largest economy and what has been its fastest-growing region head into a long depression,

the depreciation of the yen, which has fallen by 11 per cent in the past two months, will reach a stage where it destabilises the whole of the world economy. It fell yesterday to ¥144.77 against the dollar, compared with a peak of ¥80 in April 1995. The markets now expect it to fall to a rate above ¥150.

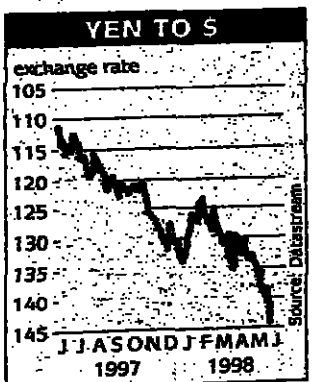
The markets also fear that the fall of the yen will force a devaluation of the Chinese yuan and the Hong Kong dollar. Any intention to devalue has been strongly denied by the Chinese authorities, but were it to happen the other countries of the region might be pushed into a further round of devaluations.

The fall in demand and the lack of confidence in the yen have depressed share prices, pushing the Nikkei-Dow index briefly below 15,000 yesterday. It recovered to close at 15,022, but the fragility of share prices is of particular concern in Japan, because the banks hold large portfolios of company shares. Falling share prices therefore threaten to bankrupt the banks. While the Japanese authorities have promised to protect depositors, ordinary Japanese savers remain fearful for their savings.

Japan is now the only member of the Group of Seven - the seven largest economies in the world - that has failed to recover from the recession of the early 1990s. It has been particularly hard-hit by the economic problems of east Asia, which take more than one-third of its exports. Proportionately this is much higher than exports from the US and Europe to the region, which in most cases are less than 10 per cent of the total.

But Japan has also suffered from shrinking demand from consumers at home. Retail sales earlier this year were running more than 8 per cent down - here in Britain they are more than 4 per cent up.

Consumers are frightened partly because they are worried that they might lose their savings due to banking collapses, but also because they might lose their jobs; despite supposed "jobs for life" in Japan, unemployment has been rising.



they will drag down the rest of the world.

Figures published yesterday show that Japan's gross domestic product (GDP) shrank by 1.3 per cent in the three months to the end of March, equivalent to a decline at an annual rate of 5.3 per cent. This follows a decline in the final quarter of last year, and leaves Japan's GDP 0.7 per cent lower than it was a year ago. This is the first full-year decline since 1974, following the first oil shock.

The decline was sharper than expected by the markets, which had forecast a fall of only about half a percent, and reflects both a lack of confidence among consumers in Japan and a fall in exports to the rest of east Asia.

The decline in the Japanese economy has led to fears that



After Magritte ... Geoff Hurst, England goal-scorer in the 1966 World Cup Final, who is to be granted a knighthood in the Queen's Birthday Honours

Andrew Burreman

Honours for the luvvies, and it's arise Sir Geoff

BY ANTHONY BEVINS
Political Editor

JOHN MORTIMER, the pre-eminent Labour "huvvy" and creator of Rumpole, is one of three knights of London theatreland in Tony Blair's second honours list today.

David Hare, the playwright, and Ian Holm, the actor, are also knighted in the Birthday Honours list, and Peter Brook, the Paris-based theatre director, is made a Companion of Honour, a restricted award for service of conspicuous national importance.

Other headline honours in-

clude peerages for Kathleen Richardson, the Free Church minister and the first ordained woman to go to the Lords, and Sir Colin Marshall, chairman of British Airways. There are knight-hoods for the BBC's John Birt, England's 1996 World Cup star Geoff Hurst, John Browne, chief executive of BP, Stuart Hampshire, chairman of the John Lewis Partnership, and John Elliot Gardiner, the conductor.

But the Prime Minister's official spokesman argued that greater prominence and honour was being directed towards people in front-line public service, like education and health

- and that in future that drive would move into other prime areas of policy, like law and order and the environment.

He said the Prime Minister wanted peerages and knight-hoods to be a measure of the contribution people were making in significant areas of public life. "The system is changing," he promised.

In descending order of rank, Commanders of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) include Victoria Glendinning, the writer, June Whitfield, the actress, and Barry Norman, the BBC film critic.

Officers of the Order of the

British Empire (OBE) include Leslie Phillips, the actor, Wayne Sleep, the dancer, Bruce Forsyth, the entertainer, and Linford Christie and Sally Gunnell, the athletes. Members of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) include Alec Stewart, the cricketer; Lennox Lewis, the boxer; and Peter Cattaneo, director of *The Full Monty*.

The list contains 976 honours, selected from 10 times as many nominations, 40 per cent of which came from members of the public. Up to two dozen offers of honours were refused. Queen's Birthday Honours, Review, pages 8-9

Innocent man freed after 23 years

BY JASON BENNETTO
AND LINUS GREGORIADIS

A PENSIONER wept on the steps of the High Court yesterday after his conviction for murder, for which he spent 23 years in jail, was quashed.

Patrick Nicholls, 69, was cleared of smothering and beating to death an elderly family friend. He can now expect up to £400,000 in compensation after

spending more than a third of his life behind bars in one of the worst-ever miscarriages of justice.

As *The Independent* revealed on Tuesday, Mr Nicholls' conviction was overturned after new evidence showed that the woman he was convicted of killing most likely died of natural causes.

After the hearing Mr Nicholls, seated in a wheelchair at

the entrance of the London Law Courts, said: "I would like to thank my mother, Ida, for the help she gave me in these past 23 years. She died a year ago."

He later said: "I always knew I would get out. Always. Somehow or other I still retained a little faith in the system." He added that it was "wonderful" to be free.

Mr Nicholls, who has been

on bail since March, was jailed in 1975 for the murder of Gladys Heath, 74, at her home in Worthing, West Sussex. Mr Nicholls always claimed he found Mrs Heath collapsed on the floor.

Lord Justice Roch said yesterday: "We allow this appeal because the pathological evidence that ... natural causes could be excluded has now been shown to be unreliable." Tale of two Paddys, page 3

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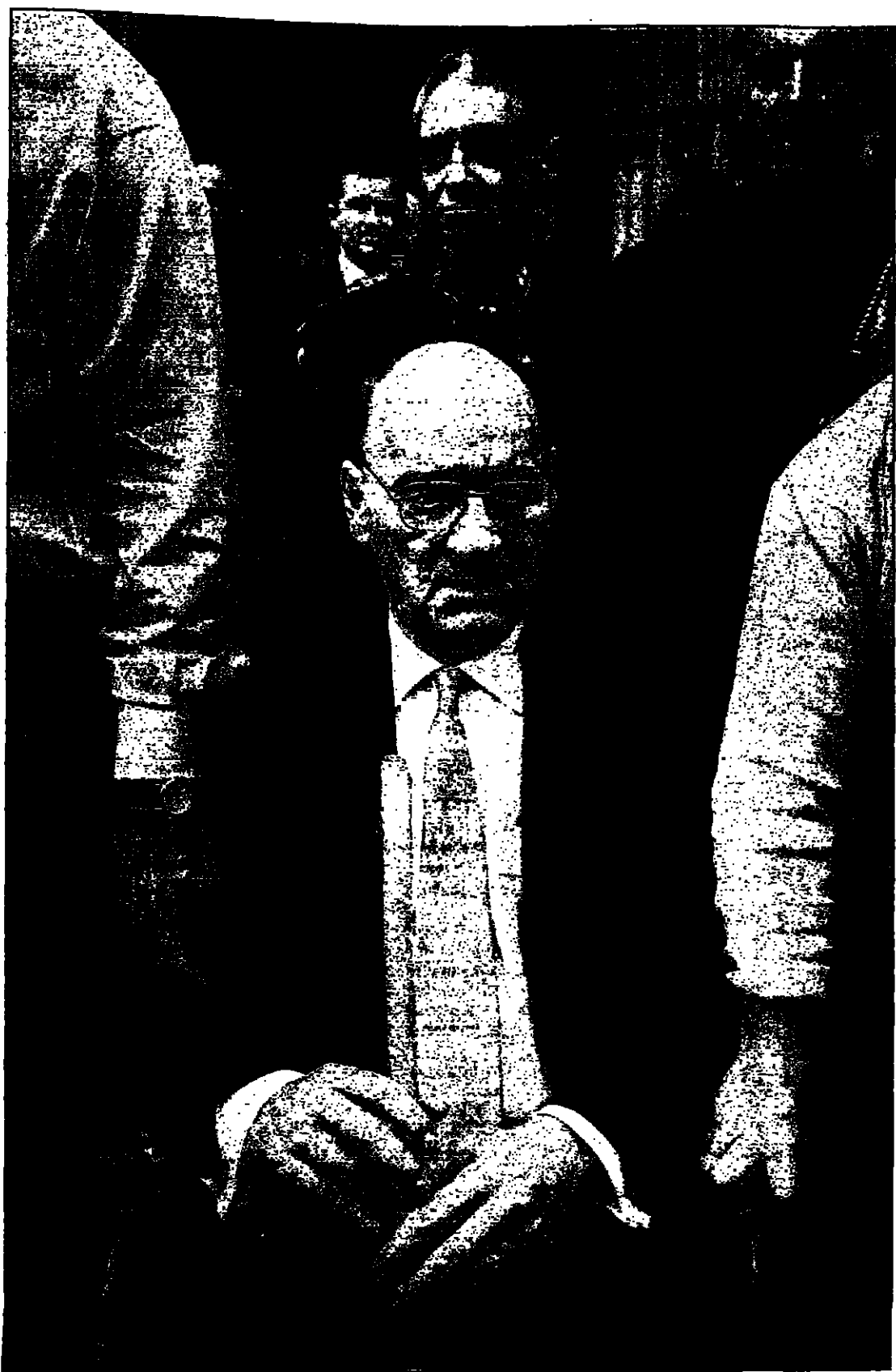
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Britain's Lee Westwood is paired with Tiger Woods in the first round of golf's US Open.
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How an unusual friendship formed between one of the Birmingham Six and a man who fought for his innocence and won

Bond that unites two wronged men



Hill pushing Nicholls away from the court after his acquittal yesterday

Tom Pilton

By JOHN DAVISON
and LINUS GREGORIADIS

PADDY NICHOLLS enjoyed his first pint as a free man yesterday afternoon, after 23 years as a convicted killer. With him in the bar of the Irish Centre in Camden, north London, was his friend and support for almost all of those years, Paddy Hill - himself a famous victim of wrongful imprisonment.

During the press conference that followed, Mr Nicholls' smiling demeanour faltered just for a second when he mentioned Mr Hill's name during a long list of "thank you" dedications, and he momentarily broke down with emotion. It was a measure of the closeness that has developed between the two men, even though they did not meet for many years.

Earlier in the day, while waiting for the court's decision, Mr Hill, who was acquitted after serving 16 years for the IRA pub bombings in Birmingham, told of the secret network of innocent prisoners within the system. While they were often in separate prisons, these men would keep in constant touch to offer each other moral support and advice as to how they should continue their battles for justice.

In fact, the first time Mr Hill actually met his friend was after his own release in 1991 when he started to visit him in jail. But by then they had been in close contact for 13 years. The nearest they had previously come to meeting was when Mr Nicholls had arrived at Parkhurst on the Isle of Wight in 1978, just as Mr Hill was leaving.

"Prisons were small places for people like us. There were only eight or nine prisons they would house us in," said Mr Hill, a slight, greying 53-year-old. "Between the prisons, you find out on the grapevine who is innocent and who isn't. People who protest their innocence get moved around a lot, it seemed, because we were always bucking the system and not conforming."

They would keep in touch, he said, using this grapevine and through what they call "dead letters" - notes sent outside the prison postal system, which is still subject to censorship for category A prisoners.

"You could communicate by word of mouth and you could give letters to people who were in transit. We had this network set up all over the country," said Mr Hill. The Guildford Four, the Bridgewater Four, the

Cardiff Three and the Tottenham Three were all part of the system.

Cynics might say that everyone in prison would claim to be innocent. But Mr Hill explained that it was not hard to sort out the genuine cases from those who were trying it on.

"You get a lot of guilty men who pretend they are innocent and it's all a ploy, but after a while they just give up and admit the truth," he said. "You found out who was fished up. With Paddy, he never stopped fighting. That man could have had parole 10 years ago if he'd just said he was guilty."

Mr Hill said that he had been fighting for Paddy Nicholls' acquit-

last February. Mr Nicholls was wearing an old pair of trousers, a T-shirt and a thin windcheater jacket. "I thought he was going to die in my arms. That man had a stroke at Christmas. He was on 20-30 tablets a day but they threw him out of prison without medication," said Mr Hill.

They now live together in Paddy Hill's flat in north London, a condition which had been set by the courts. Mr Nicholls' family deserted him years ago. "He hasn't adjusted. You don't adjust," said Mr Hill. "He can't afford to get angry about what has happened because of his health. The next thing could take his life away." His friend will,

Mostly, Mr Nicholls spends his time at the computer, writing his memoirs.

For Mr Hill, too, his work for those he believes to be wrongly imprisoned goes on. "There are thousands of innocent people in jail, I just campaigned for him like many others," he said.

The problem for those who are innocent, say prison staff, is that they are likely to end up having a harder time inside than those who admit their guilt and settle down to do their time. Governors stress that all inmates are dealt with the same, and that it is the duty of the Prison Service to uphold the decision of the courts until such time as it may be changed. But prison officers say that people who believe they have a genuine grievance are more likely to end up in trouble within the system through mounting protests, and so suffer segregation and other punishments. Also, like Paddy Nicholls, they can find themselves serving extra time because of a refusal to admit guilt.

"It's like a Catch 22," said Mark Freeman, assistant general secretary of the Prison Officers' Association. "There is a culture in the system that says that someone's release should be put back unless they address their crime, and attend classes and therapy sessions. In general, this is a very important part of protecting the public, but for an innocent man it is very difficult. Either he sells out and admits his guilt, even though he knows he is not guilty, or he stays in prison."

Chris Mullin, the Labour MP for Sunderland South who championed the cases of the Birmingham Six and gave advice to those working for Mr Nicholls, says a further problem occurs when an innocent man is finally released. Whereas someone leading up to release from a life sentence would be gradually reintroduced into society through courses and increased liberties within prisons, those who are found innocent on appeal are immediately pitched out into the world.

"This can have disastrous results," said Mr Mullin. "They find it impossible to cope. I think this is the greatest unresolved issue in this area."

Just how well Paddy Nicholls learns to cope remains to be seen. Certainly, he can count on the continued support of the informal network, if not on any help from the system that wrongly imprisoned him for so long.



Paddy Nicholls drinking in freedom in the Irish Centre

tal ever since he was himself released, and visited him every six weeks. While still inside, both had also helped with other prisoners' cases by writing letters on their behalf. "Paddy used to help other people who didn't understand all the technicalities. I used to help people as well with writing and other things."

He described how he picked his friend up from Albany Prison on the Isle of Wight on a freezing, rainy day

however, he pursuing his claim for compensation through the European courts, on the grounds that the Home Office "hasn't got a clue".

Despite today's victory, it seems on recent experience that Mr Nicholls will have little opportunity for traditional forms of celebration. He cannot drink, maybe occasionally visiting the pub to sip a half-pint of Guinness, and his general state of health remains extremely poor - "he's semi-paralysed", says Mr Hill.

Top French perfumier shot by masked raiders

By JOHN LICHFIELD
in Paris

JEAN-PAUL GUERLAIN, one of the world's leading perfumers, was shot and wounded yesterday by a gang of masked raiders who pillaged his chateau west of Paris.

Mr Guerlain's estate manager was shot in the chest and two other employees were slightly injured during a four-hour raid on the sprawling property. The gang of 10 to 12 men, who ransacked several buildings on the estate, "Maison", near Montfort-l'Amaury in the Yvelines, escaped with cash, jewellery and silverware worth several hundred thousand pounds.

Mr Guerlain, 63, is known as one of the last "noses" - or old-fashioned scent designers - in the business. He sold the 170-year-old family firm, which claims to be the first specialist perfume house, to the French luxury goods group LVMH four years ago. Mr Guerlain remained the company's chief perfume adviser.

On the day before the raid, he had launched his newest creation, Guerlainade, at a media show on the Champs-Élysées.



Guerlain: victim of 'savage attack'

Gamma/FSP

Police said that the raiders, armed with revolvers and pump-action rifles, shot Mr Guerlain in the thigh and his estate manager in the chest as they left the property.

It is thought that the perfumier tried to raise the alarm

or grab a gun. Mr Guerlain was said to be recovering and his manager was "in critical condition" last night. Two other employees were slightly injured; one was beaten up by the raiders; the other jumped from a window to try to escape.

The chief public prosecutor of the Versailles area, Yves Collet, described the raid as a "savage attack" in which several members of the family and staff were threatened and beaten in order to force them to reveal and open the safes. Forty police officers were assigned to the case.

The Guerlain label was involved in a brief fracas with the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, last year, after it claimed in advertising that he regularly used its men's cologne, Habit Rouge. The company withdrew the ads after Downing Street issued a denial.

The perfume house was founded by Pierre Guerlain on the Rue de Rivoli in Paris in 1828. Its international reputation was made by a perfume called Shalimar, which was first marketed in 1925 and is still its biggest seller today.

Jean-Paul, the fifth generation of the family to head the business, says he can distinguish between 3,000 scents, which he personally scours the world to buy. He created his first perfume in 1959, and his best-known creations include Chamaele (1969), Nahema (1979) and Hérédité (1992).

Woodward launches new challenge

IN A MANOEUVRE that could further delay a resolution of the Louise Woodward murder case, her defence team has again challenged the results of the post-mortem performed on baby Matthew Eappen.

A motion filed with the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court demands the release of information about the professional history of the coroner who conducted the examination, Dr Gerald Feigin. He resigned from the medical examiner's office in May and is now working in New Jersey.

By DAVID USBORNE
in New York

Dr Feigin is under a cloud because of revelations that he may have bungled an earlier manslaughter case, in which a teacher died after being assaulted by a student. New evidence suggests the crime was labelled as manslaughter incorrectly. The charges against the boy are under review.

Dr Feigin ruled that the teacher, David McHugh, had died from the blows. Subse-

quently, another examiner ascertained that the teacher had had a heart condition that could have caused his death.

The testimony of Dr Feigin in Woodward's 1997 trial was pivotal to the prosecution's contention that Matthew Eappen died because of a two-and-a-half-inch skull fracture caused by shaking and battering inflicted by the defendant. The defence contends that the injury was weeks old.

In its motion, the defence argues that had they been conducted on the boy, similar

microscopic tests would have uncovered information to exonerate Woodward. It asks the court to release all information regarding the McHugh case.

Woodward was convicted of second-degree murder last October but two weeks later the judge reduced the verdict to manslaughter and freed her.

Seven Supreme Justices have been weighing appeals in the case since a hearing in early March and had been expected to rule in the next few weeks. An option would be to call for a re-trial.

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CHRIS PATTEN, the former Hong Kong governor who is to carry out a fundamental review of policing in Northern Ireland, yesterday tip-toed gingerly through the political minefield in his first appearance in the job.

Mr Patten and his seven-member team are to report by next summer on all aspects of policing, as commissioned in the Good Friday Agreement. Clearly aware of the myriad sensitivities surrounding the issue, he resolutely turned away difficult questions, saying that he was not prepared to talk about the substance of the work.

Among them were questions about whether the force might face disbandment, as is demanded by Republicans.

The commission's remit is to design "a police service that can enjoy widespread support from, and is seen as an integral part of, the community as a whole". It will examine the RUC's composition, recruitment, training, culture, ethos and symbols.



Chris Patten and the RUC Chief Constable, Ronnie Flanagan, launch a review of the force

Virgin trains for Channel tunnel

RICHARD BRANSON'S Virgin empire is proposing to run high-speed trains through the Channel tunnel in competition with Eurostar, operated by its French-British Airways.

Virgin, which already operates the west coast and cross-country services, plans to make Watford an international rail hub offering five daily trips to Paris and Brussels. The service could start running early next January.

The proposals, which have been seen by *The Independent*, also envisage Virgin running high-speed trains from Scotland, Manchester, York, Newcastle and Birmingham to the continent.

The move by Branson will steal some of the thunder from British Airways - which earlier this month won the right to run Eurostar services from London's Waterloo to the Continent. However, it is understood that BA has rejected the option to link northern towns to European capitals.

BA and Virgin remain fiercely competitive. The two tussled first for the skies above the Atlantic, then bid for the same pieces of the nation's domestic trainset when it was being sold off.

won. But the most recent battle saw BA secure the prestigious Eurostar service north-west.

That has not deterred Virgin. Its managers believe their plan will not only bring thousands of jobs to the north, but also offer high-speed services to those living north west of London.

Although promised for the best part of a decade, regional people a year make a journey of a similar length from erdeen to London.

Eurostar services - dubbed 'rides to the north' - have remained a dream. When the Channel tunnel was opened

Thousands join striking firefighters' protest march

THOUSANDS OF firefighters from across the country joined a demonstration yesterday in support of colleagues in

Ken Cameron, general secretary of the Fire Brigades' Union, led a march through Chelmsford in Essex as military Green Goddesses were brought in to provide emergency cover. Around 1,000 firefighters in the county were staging their second strike of the week, with two further walkouts planned for next week.

Father in plea to 'lost' daughter

A HEARTBROKEN pensioner appealed yesterday for his long-lost daughter to contact him again after he turned her away from his house in Bristol in the mistaken belief she was a hoaxer. John Worstfold, who became separated from his five-year-old daughter Vicky, 26 years ago when she emigrated to New Zealand with his wife, said: "I am so proud of myself. I hope that we can get together again."

Halle director to step down

A SUSPENDED director of the cash-strapped Halle Orchestra is to quit his job, it was announced yesterday.

Deputy chief executive John Whibley, 53, was suspended on full pay in February alongside finance director John Whitaker who left "by mutual agreement" a month later. The Manchester-based Halle Concerts Society faced bankruptcy in February with debts of £1.1m which accountants blamed on poor financial management.

Lucky escape as prank backfires

TWO BOYS were today recovering after a prank went wrong and they became trapped in a bottle-bank barrel in a fast-flowing stream. As Gavin Hoskins, 10, and Kurtis Walters, 10, struggled to free themselves from the 1,500-litre barrel, two teenagers ran to their aid. Andrew Webb and John Raynard, both 15, pulled the youngsters to safety as firemen arrived at the Malago stream in the Hartcliffe area of Bristol. Both boys were unharmed.

Home-owners stay bullish

HOME-OWNERS remain confident that house prices will continue to rise this year, a survey suggested yesterday. Consumer confidence is particularly booming in the south of England, where 66 per cent of adults expect house prices to move up, compared with only 46 per cent in the North.

Mortgage rates, business, page17

Former Parkhurst head dies

JOHN MARRIOTT, former governor of Parkhurst prison, has died of a heart attack at his home on the Isle of Wight. He was 51. Mr Marriott was in charge of the jail when three prisoners serving life sentences escaped in 1995, and was forced to resign over the incident. A dispute followed over whether Mr Marriott, who leaves a widow, Marianne, had been made a scapegoat.

Hernia warning for golfers

IF YOU thought golf was a safe sport, think again. Enthusiastic swinging of the club and twisting of the torso puts so much stress and strain on golfing groins that golfers are 80 per cent more likely to have a hernia than non-players, according to new research. Dudley Rogg, clinic director of the British Hernia Centre in London, which carried out the research, says that the groin is particularly sensitive.

[illegible]

هَذَا مِنْ الْأَصْلِ



A 19th-century Noh mask of a demon, which will feature among lots in the Japanese works of art sale during Sotheby's AsiaWeek next week

Neville Elder

كلنا من الادل

Theatre school head in drama over sackings

THE PRINCIPAL of one of Britain's best-known theatre schools was facing calls for his resignation last night after protests from students.

More than 100 students are staging a sit-in at Rose Bruford College, which trained stars like Steve Huison, from the hit *The Full Monty*, Dracula star Gary Oldman, and Lynda Steadman, who starred in Mike Leigh's drama *Career Girls*.

Staff and students at the college in south London are demanding that Professor Robert Ely quit over the sacking of two senior staff.

Members of Equity, the actors' union, and the lecturers' union NATFHE have been asked to refuse to work at the college after the sacking of Sue Colgrave, head of theatre, and Jonathan Martin, head of directing. Both are appealing against their dismissal.

A petition signed by nearly 60 senior figures from the world of stage and broadcasting, including Huison, director Jude Kelly and playwright Edward Bond, claims academic standards at the college are being seriously undermined, and calls for a "truly impartial and independent investigation into the current crisis".

The college rejected the criticisms, and said most students supported Professor Ely.

Students occupying the college gym and offices were staging rehearsals and performances yesterday as they prepared for a weekend confrontation with the college management. A student union statement said they had been "fired, misquoted, misled and kept in the dark about matters that affect our education".

One of the protesters, Eleanor Brunsdon, said: "We feel now that the only way we can restore the college's reputation and artistic integrity is if the principal resigns."

The college, whose alumni also include former Dr Who actor Tom Baker and actress Nerys Hughes, was founded by 1950. It offers degrees in acting, direction and technical stage skills to more than 800 students at Sidcup, Kent, and Deptford, south-east London.

BY BEN RUSSELL
Education Correspondent

Relations between staff and Professor Ely have deteriorated. Actor and director Lawrence Evans, who is among those boycotting work at the college, said: "There's an atmosphere of fear and intimidation which has pervaded the college... Morale is incredibly low. The reputation of the college and its public profile have been severely damaged."

The college, however, rejected the criticisms. A statement said: "There are students



Steve Huison and Lynda Steadman - past students



who were concerned about the behaviour of these two members of staff and whose education was affected, otherwise disciplinary action would not have been taken.

"Furthermore, there are many current students who have voiced support for the college and for Professor Ely. They are not taking such extreme action and therefore do not get noticed. The majority of the students continue to support the college and Professor Ely."

Nickell detective sues police

A WOMAN detective who took part in a controversial "honeypot" operation involving Colin Stagg, prime suspect in the Rachel Nickell murder investigation, is suing Scotland Yard after taking early retirement.

The officer, known only by her undercover name of Lizzie James, has been off work for the past 18 months suffering from stress.

Her civil action alleges she was not offered leave or professional support following her "traumatic" role in the investigation, and had suffered emotional problems as a result.

BY KIM SENGUPTA

The 33-year-old married detective constable has spent 13 years with the Metropolitan Police. If she wins her legal action the compensation package and various benefits she is entitled to could add up to several hundred thousand pounds.

"Lizzie" befriended Mr Stagg in an attempt to get information which would incriminate him over the frenzied knife murder of Ms Nickell on Wimbledon Common, south-west London, in 1992.

The operation was so secret

that the officer was ordered not to tell her husband, who also works for the Metropolitan Police.

The undercover officer posed as a disturbed woman looking for a partner to indulge in sometimes violent sexual fantasies. The pair built up a relationship in which Mr Stagg is alleged to have talked about sexual acts involving knives and bondage. His lawyers argued that he was enticed to do so by the policewoman.

The operation - which was supervised by forensic psychologist Paul Britton - came

in for scathing criticism from Mr Justice Ognall at the Old Bailey when he threw out charges against Mr Stagg in 1994. He said it was "a substantial attempt to incriminate a suspect by positive and deceptive conduct of the grossest kind".

The detective constable continued to work afterwards for Scotland Yard but began to suffer from stress when she learnt that Mr Britton planned to reveal details of her role in the inquiry in his memoirs.

In the book, Mr Britton said the blonde detective was ideal for the undercover job because of her good looks, bubbly personality, and experience in infiltrating criminal organisations.

He wrote: "This time she was to be a damaged and deeply disturbed young woman, nursing a dark sexual secret and looking for a man who shared similar experiences."

Friends of "Lizzie" say that what she had to do had far-reaching consequences. Her marriage suffered, and she put on weight.

"She was put in front of Stagg as a sex object and she doesn't want to be seen as sexy any more."

A spokesman for the Metropolitan Police Federation said it was backing the detective constable's legal action.

"She has taken early retirement due to the trauma she suffered as a result of the role she played in the Nickell investigation," the spokesman said.

"We are pursuing a civil claim against the Metropolitan Police Commissioner on the grounds that she was not offered sufficient support in dealing with the difficult experiences she went through."

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Dr Basu, found guilty of professional misconduct Raymond

Doctor guilty after girl, 10, dies at dentist

A CONSULTANT anaesthetist was yesterday found guilty of serious professional misconduct after a 10-year-old girl died at a dentist's surgery.

Dr Tapas Kumar Basu failed to follow basic guidelines in a routine operation on Katie Dougal and made inadequate attempts to resuscitate her when she collapsed, the General Medical Council said.

The verdict will renew patients' fears about the safety of general anaesthetics given outside hospitals. Guidelines for dentists were tightened after a series of deaths in which dentists, acting as their own anaesthetists, failed to monitor the heart rate and breathing of their patient as they operated.

Dr Basu was a consultant anaesthetist called to assist at an operation on Katie, of Breaston, in Derbyshire, in January 1996 after a school playground fall in which she broke two front teeth. Her mother took her to the dental surgery in Long Eaton, Derbyshire immediately after the accident and was told by her dentist, Mark Duckmanton, to bring her back the next day.

Dr Basu, who now works at Neath General Hospital in West Glamorgan, escaped being

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

monitor her heart rate on an electrocardiogram (ECG) and failed to use a capnograph to monitor carbon dioxide levels, because it was broken.

There was a working capnograph in the practice's second surgery, which was not in use. The GMC heard that he had also ignored three sets of dental anaesthetic guidelines with which he had failed to familiarise himself.

When the girl's heart-rate dropped, he ventilated her lungs but failed to use a defibrillator to re-start her heart. That was left to the ambulance men who were called to the surgery arriving after eight minutes. They used the defibrillator seven times to deliver shocks to her heart but it was too late. She was pronounced dead on arrival at Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham.

The GMC's professional conduct committee yesterday found that Dr Basu, 59, failed to react "adequately" to the emergency, did not use the correct monitors during the operation and had not kept up to date with the latest developments in his field.

However, Dr Basu, who now works at Neath General Hospital in West Glamorgan, escaped being

struck off the Medical Register. Instead the council imposed a three-year condition on his registration restricting him to work with adult patients in hospital, where there are back-up staff and facilities.

Sir Herbert Duthie, chairman of the committee, said: "Trust lies at the heart of the doctor-patient relationship. Patients, and in the case of children, their parents, entrust doctors with their lives and wellbeing. They expect, and are entitled to expect, that doctors will keep their medical knowledge and skills in the speciality in which they are practising up to date and that they will act appropriately in an emergency. The facts found proved against you show that you failed to provide an adequate standard of practice in this tragic case."

Katie's mother, Patricia Dougal, earlier told the hearing how she squeezed her daughter's hand as Dr Basu gave her an injection.

"He said it would be like a cat's scratch and she was rubbing about her two cats. I was rubbing the back of her hand and she went to sleep."

Ms Dougal said she then went into a side room and did not realise anything was wrong until she heard a buzzer alarm 15-20 minutes later. Dr Basu refused to comment.



Katie Dougal, who died after being administered anaesthetic

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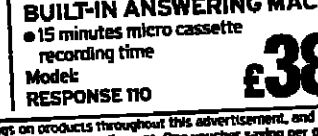
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The Link

Cyclists at more risk in country than in towns

CYCLING in the countryside is three times more dangerous than riding in towns and cities, according to an analysis of government statistics.

Although rural roads account for only 9 per cent of all accidents involving bikes, almost half of the 220 cycling deaths each year occur in the "non-built-up" areas. The report, by the Transport Research Laboratory, found that the rate of fatal accidents on roads in rural villages was three times that on city streets.

Experts blame the death toll on motorists who use rural roads as rat-runs to avoid busy highways, and an increase in tourist traffic.

The risk of being killed while riding a bicycle is now 16 times greater than while driving a car, and the injury rate has risen every year for the past five years. The report calls for a comprehensive network of cycle routes to tackle this.

Ministers are aware of the

BY RANDEEP RAMESH
Transport Correspondent

difficulties faced by cyclists. Earlier this year the Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of state for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, John Prescott, set up the Countryside Traffic Measures group to see what measures could be adopted to stem the rising accident rate.

Yesterday, ministers approved the conversion of more than 200 miles of disused railway land into cycle lanes as part of the 8,000 mile National Cycle Network. Mr Prescott would like to quadruple the number of cycle trips made in Britain by 2012, and the network is central to this.

Most of the new routes will allow cyclists to stay off busy highways. The use of 13 miles of former British Rail land between Airdrie and Bathgate will mean that cyclists can largely avoid traffic while

travelling from Glasgow to Edinburgh.

Radical measures such as low-speed zones and car-free streets may also be required in the face of an explosion in rural car use. The Countryside Commission has pointed out that for many city dwellers "the countryside of England offers a valuable escape from the rigours of everyday life. It is therefore ironic that 91 per cent of visitors to national parks arrive by car, thus risking the destruction of the very thing for which they are looking for."

In city centres, the report says, busy junctions pose the greatest threat for cyclists. However, for two-wheelers like the countryside, 40 per cent of injuries sustained are in locations "that would not create the expectation of risk".

The report adds: "In other words, rural cyclists appear to be in danger when they are cycling along 'minding their own business'."

High-flying teenagers wanted for dome circus

RINGMASTER Peter Mandelson will recruit 180 young people to train as circus acrobats in the big show spectacular planned for the Millennium dome.

Tight-rope walkers, trick cyclists, and trapeze artists are needed. Clowns need not apply but jugglers, still walkers and fire eaters will help to make the performance "athletic and modern", as creative director Mark Fisher visualises it. The show will be staged six times a day from the year 2000 in the big theatre space within the dome. The troupe of 180 will be divided into two teams.

To celebrate the first anniversary of the Government giving the dome the go-ahead on 19 June last year, the recruitment drive will begin next Thursday. The New Millennium

BY NONIE NIESWAND

Experience are looking for 16, 17 and 18 year-olds to run away and join the Circus Space school in east London.

Auditions will be held at dance schools throughout the country. Graduates from Circus Space, which is affiliated to the Berkshire College of Technology, are awarded a B.Tec vocational A level. The normal two year course will be compressed into one intensive year of training for the eve of 31 December, 1999, when the dome becomes a big top. Traditional circuses recruit from a pool of trained Chinese and Russian performers which is why the NME will train their own.

"The performance of 12 graduates from Circus Space at the degree show a fortnight ago

was brilliant, says Mark Fisher.

Artistic director of the show, and in charge of personnel, choreographer Micha Bergese has set up a huge production office at Circus Space in Coronet Street, London. Rock star Peter Dinklage, and architect Mark Fisher will work with the recruits, all of whom will be sworn to secrecy so that the show will still have some surprises.

As the designer who helped drive the Rolling Stones into tax exile after the phenomenal success of road shows like "Steel Wheels" and "Babylon", Mark Fisher uses special effects like lights, fireworks and inflatables to dramatise live performances. Now he says he is looking forward to working with the circus performers to make it the greatest show on earth.

HOWARD JACOBSON

Because we love the grotesque - because we are the grotesque - we are not gullible

THE WEEKEND REVIEW, PAGE 5

CATHOLICS!

The Traditional Latin Mass is still widely celebrated with Episcopal permission. It is often sung with Gregorian chant. If you would like to worship at this rite of Mass Contact

The Latin Mass Society for an information pack 0171 404 4959 24hrs

هكذا من الاصل

After decades blue whales come home

BLUE WHALES, the world's largest animals, which were driven to the edge of extinction by hunting, have been sighted again in British waters for the first time in at least 20 years.

They have been spotted from the survey ships of oil exploration companies in the "Atlantic Frontier", the region to the north-west of Scotland likely to be the next big oil production area.

Five of the animals, which can be 100ft long and weigh more than 200 tons, were seen last year, according to an unpublished report of the Government's Joint Nature Conservation Committee, the agency which looks after wildlife for Great Britain.

"It's fantastically good news," said Mark Simmonds, marine biologist with the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society.

"World-wide they were almost extinct and they had certainly vanished from sight in the North Atlantic in recent decades."

Indications that a population of blue whales was inhabiting the waters west of Scotland first came two years ago from the United States navy's top-secret Sound Surveillance System,

BY MICHAEL MCCARTHY
Environment Correspondent

which once tracked Soviet submarines for hundreds of miles across the Atlantic using seabed hydrophones down to 10,000 feet.

As well as the sounds the vessels made, they also picked up much whale song, the deep noises the animals make, and American zoologists picked out the blue whale amongst them.

The animals were first seen in 1996, when two were spotted, according to the report's author, marine biologist Carolyn Stone, who saw one herself.

"They have a very distinct tall, slender blow [the spout] which can be up nine metres tall, and a small fin for their very large size," she said.

But before the sightings from the seismic survey ships, which fire sound waves at the seabed to search for oil, there had been none for many years, the last recorded being a single sighting off north-west Ireland in May 1977.

The whaling slaughter in the early decades of this century reduced the blue whale population in the North Atlantic, once hundreds of thousands, to an estimated 3,000 today.

"It is very significant but it is too early to say if it indicates any sort of population recovery," Mr Simmonds said.

"It also emphasises the importance of this area of the ocean for whales, and the importance of controlling the new industrial activities that are taking place in it."

Blue whales are the largest animals ever to have lived on earth, bigger than any of the dinosaurs. At birth, a calf is more than 20ft long and weighs two and a half tons; when fully grown, the animal's heart is the height of a tall man, weighs as much as a horse and pumps blood through arteries so big a child could crawl through them.



Feeding time for a blue whale. The biggest animal that has ever lived on earth, it has been seen again off Scotland

Planet Earth Pictures

Weldon takes on feminists in TV series

THE FIRST feminist television drama is to be screened next month on Channel 4.

Big Women, written by the novelist Fay Weldon and produced by the one-time revolutionary activist, Tariq Ali, chronicles the rise of a feminist publishing house through the Seventies.

The series, which starts on 2 July and stars Daniella Nardini (Anna from This Life), Clare Holman and Anastasia Hilla, seems certain to re-ignite the debate on the state of feminism, not least among the original feminist publishers, Virago and Women's Press, who may not like the way the fictional publishing house is portrayed.

Fay Weldon, who has already published a novel based on her TV script, has suffered accusations of feminist revisionism and betrayal. Polly Toynbee, the social commentator, has called her feminism's Winnie Mandela. In the series, the women set up the company, Medusa, after much drinking and debating. They celebrate by dancing naked together. One decides there and then to leave her husband and children, before going naked out into the street.

Weldon, said yesterday: "The series was Tariq's idea. But I go on thinking that anything that is done by men and women together has a kind of energy and life as God intended. Things that women do together tend to be more dutiful. "It's amazing this is the first drama about feminism there

BY DAVID LISTER
Arts News Editor

has been on television. But for so long we haven't been able to see the wood for the trees.

"Perhaps the series will show how dangerous ideologies and isms are ... you've got women with permission to hate men now and that's what we have to pull back from."

Big Women opens with feminists putting up posters declaring that "A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle", and defacing sexist posters with the words "This exploits women".

But Fay Weldon said yesterday: "I would like men to go around now saying 'This advert diminishes men'. Look at those ads with women putting a stiletto heel on a man's face."

"Imagine it the other way round. It's appalling. In the under-40s, sexism exists even more now from women to men than from men to women."

"In the last episode I have a young woman who goes around firing all the men. I thought she was dreadful, but all the young female reviewers love her."

According to insiders, making the series has had a radicalising effect on the young actresses involved.

Anastasia Hilla who plays Stephanie, the woman who leaves her family, said: "Some of the things feminists were saying in the Seventies sound ludicrous now. But I respect Stephanie and feel a sense of indebtedness to women like her."

Space invaders were not aliens, say police

THEY CAME from outer space, heading for the Earth in their hundreds. To those on the ground, they were visible as blazing blue lights whizzing through the night sky across England.

But the hundreds of worried callers who contacted police claiming to have seen a single blue light bigger than a car, or a burning aeroplane, or (of course) a flying saucer, were wrong. "The Martians haven't landed," one policeman reassured a caller.

Instead, it was a harmless meteor shower, in which none of the rocks was big enough even to hit the ground before burning up.

Police forces in counties running from Devon to the Midlands - and including some as

BY CHARLES ARTHUR
Science & Technology Editor

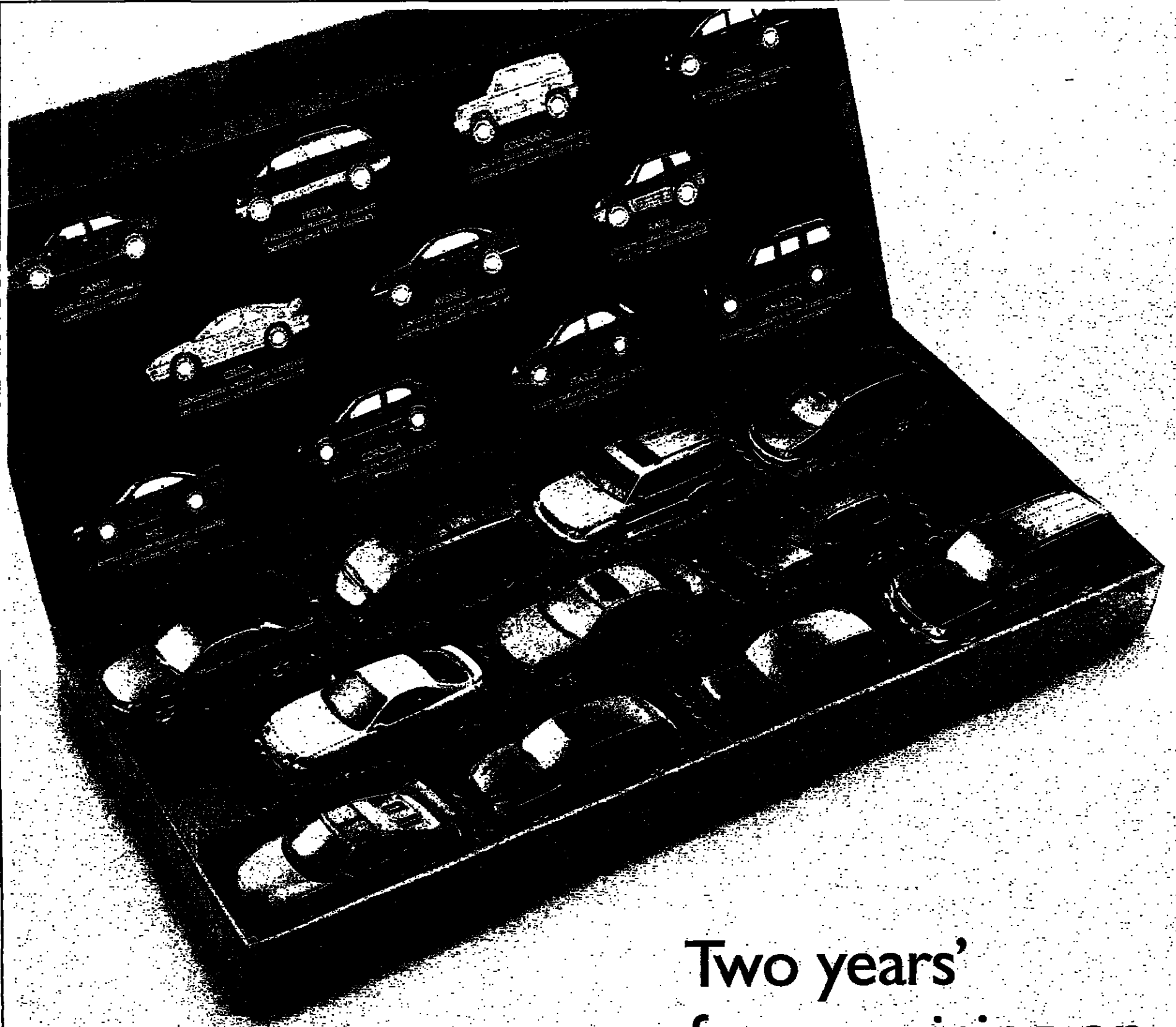
far afield as Wales and Sussex - received calls around midnight on Thursday.

Sergeant John Drake, of Staffordshire Police, said: "We had more than a dozen calls around midnight from people who had seen a single, blue light that was bigger than a car."

"Many officers from police cars also radioed in saying they had seen the same thing."

The lights are caused by the rocks heating up and burning as they fall into the upper atmosphere at about 70,000 kilometres per hour.

An estimated 14 million meteors enter the atmosphere every day. Most are only as big as a grain of sand.



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Schools told stop selection on ability

SCHOOLS SHOULD stop selecting some of their pupils by academic ability, according to new Government guidelines. The interim guidelines, published yesterday, also propose sorting out some of the problems parents face getting their children into the school of their choice by setting up a "clearing house" with a single application form and timetable.

In his foreword, David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, gives the clearest signal so far that he expects partial selection, allowed by the previous government, to end. "Partial selection based on academic ability is not in the best interests of parents and children."

He points out that new independent adjudicators will be able to abolish it if complaints are made to them either by local authorities or parents.

BY JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

Grammar schools will continue, unless parents vote to abolish them.

Under the last government all schools were allowed to select up to 15 per cent of pupils and opted-out schools could select more with the permission of the Secretary of State. The School Standards and Framework Bill, before Parliament, allows partial selection to continue but gives the adjudicators power to end it.

The guidelines aim to end the "admissions gridlock" over school places, attacked by the Audit Commission last year, with one in five parents failing to get their first choice of school. Problems have arisen because of the last government's policy of letting opted-out schools run their own admissions.

Parents in places such as Bromley, Hertfordshire and Wandsworth, in London, may have to apply to seven or eight schools and still not find a place for their child. The system enables some parents to hold on to several offers of school places while others face months of uncertainty because they have not been offered one.

In Watford, Hertfordshire, in March this year 1,000 children, a third of the total, were without a school place because the rest were holding on to several offers from grant-maintained schools which all had their own admissions timetables. Opted-out schools are blocking the county council's efforts to set up a clearing house system, and Mr Blunkett announced yesterday that he was imposing a co-ordinated admissions scheme on the county.

Under the new guidelines, all

schools in an area should now work with the local authority to produce common timetables and a single application form by September 2000, say the guidelines. Ideally, the arrangements should start this autumn.

Admissions criteria should be clear, fair and objective, under the proposed changes. Interviews will be outlawed except for church schools which want to determine a child's religious affiliation. All schools and the local authority will have to discuss their admissions policies in local forums and the independent adjudicators will settle disputes.

Margaret Tulloch, of the Campaign for the Advancement of State Education, the parents' pressure group, said she welcomed the general thrust of the guidelines. "We shall have to see what happens on the ground," she said.



Pupils at St George's, where a memorial plaque has been erected for former head Philip Lawrence Andrew Burman

SUDAN EMERGENCY

URGENT UPDATE

FACT Without UNICEF emergency supplies Tabitha could have died

When two year old Tabitha's mother brought her to a UNICEF - supplied feeding centre she was severely malnourished and suffering from diarrhoea. She was probably just a few days from death.

Now, after being fed UNIMIX (a nutritious, multi-vitamin porridge) and treated with oral rehydration salts, Tabitha has gained enough weight and strength to sit up and feed herself - you can see her progress in the table below.

Thanks to people's generous support, Tabitha and thousands of children like her are receiving the emergency aid they so desperately need.

FACT UNICEF is providing more than just food to the children of Sudan

Although most press coverage has focused on delivering emergency food to the children, UNICEF has been working to ensure that they can eat in the future - by providing seeds and tools to try and secure a successful September harvest.

UNICEF is also continuing to provide urgently needed medical supplies to the feeding centres, as children who are malnourished are particularly vulnerable to life-threatening diseases.

FACT Children are still in danger and supplies are running out

UNICEF desperately needs to raise more funds to help children survive the coming months. With your help we could:

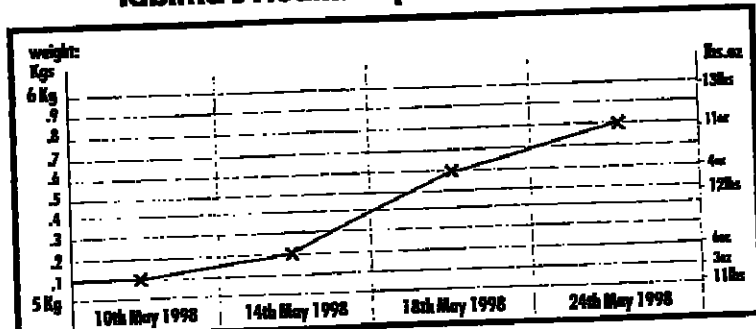
- Provide clean water to prevent the spread of waterborne diseases
- Supply rehydration salts to stop children dying of diarrhoea and loss of fluid
- Supply and administer vaccines to prevent lethal epidemics
- Provide high energy foods such as UNIMIX and dried Soya milk to the children we are now reaching in other areas of southern Sudan
- Provide shelter and blankets
- Pay for the fuel and running costs of the supply planes

As part of 'Operation Lifeline Sudan', UNICEF is working with conflict victims on all sides of the war. Of course for the children in Sudan, peace is the answer - but right now they need protection.

FACT You can help save a child's life in Sudan

Tabitha is living proof of what your donation can do - please help UNICEF save the lives of the many children still at risk from malnutrition and disease.

Tabitha's Health Improvement Chart



Tabitha and her mother

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Murdered head's success turns to failure

BY DIANA BLAMIRE

TWO AND a half years after headteacher Philip Lawrence was stabbed to death, the London secondary school that he had turned around has been declared a failing school.

The decision means that the school inspectorate, Ofsted, has branded half of the eight secondary schools in the borough of Westminster as having "serious problems" and two have been declared to be failing.

The Ofsted report on St George's School, in Maida Vale, is thought to conclude that the standard of teaching overall is below the acceptable levels.

The inspectors are critical of "pupils' attainment" which "remains below the national expectations".

They say "improvements are required in tackling poor attendance and truancy", and the proportion of lessons which are good or satisfactory is around 10 per cent below the national average.

The report is also critical of the management of the school which inspectors believe is insufficient to deal with serious difficulties the school faces.

When Mr Lawrence was appointed in 1993, St George's was threatened with closure. An Ofsted report that year said "urgent action" was needed to redress "the significant level of underachievement".

Mr Lawrence took a tough

line and expelled 60 pupils during his time at the school. His no-nonsense policy paid off and the academic legacy was a threefold increase in students passing five GCSEs at grades A to C, up to 20 per cent in 1996 from 6 per cent in 1994.

Shortly before he was murdered by Learco Chindamo in December 1995, Mr Lawrence said: "This school has turned around. Like the phoenix, we have risen from the ashes."

Commenting on the Ofsted decision, Mr Lawrence's widow, Frances, said: "I'm not at all surprised given the ethos of the school now. I foresaw this. I think Philip would be terribly disappointed. He took a very tough line - but in a healthy way. He gave his life to those pupils to those pupils before he died."

"I hope they focus on the right areas to improve it. I should very much have liked to have continued to be involved in the school but I haven't been allowed. But I will always feel an involvement with the school."

Opposition councillors on the Tory flagship council are angry that the school has been allowed to sink so low.

Labour education spokesman Paul Dimoldenberg said: "The memory of Philip Lawrence has been let down. This is a sad betrayal."

Hague dodges debate over Lord Archer

BY ANTHONY BEVINS
Political Editor

WILLIAM HAGUE yesterday attempted to distance himself from controversy surrounding Lord Archer's campaign for the post of mayor of London.

In a flurry of charge and counter-charge throughout this week, Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare replied to a number of long-standing allegations about his colourful past - only to find that one of his alibis was shaky, and that his answers had in some cases raised more questions.

The threat posed by Lord Archer's candidacy was illustrated yesterday when questions about him took over a press conference held by the party leader before the Welsh Conservative Party conference at Llangollen.

Mr Hague told reporters that it was up to London party members to choose their candidate in the new one member, one vote process that he had introduced.

"I'm not going to endorse or to express disapproval of any of the possible Conservative candidates," Mr Hague said. "It's up to the members."

He added: "I have the confidence to say to my members: you decide."

Asked whether he was happy with Lord Archer's indication that he would stay in the race, Mr Hague replied: "I don't get

involved in campaigns within the party for mayor of London. It's up to the members and it's up to the candidates to decide whether they want to be candidates."

Mr Hague's replies were taken in some quarters as a calculated snub to Lord Archer, which they were not.

But the Llangollen exchanges illustrated the difficulty and potential embarrassment that would be created if Lord Archer did decide to throw his hat into the ring.

At that point, there is no doubt that allegations about Lord Archer's past would be referred to the party's newly created Ethics and Integrity Committee, set up, in Mr Hague's own words, "so that at last the reputation of our party can be protected from those who damage it through misconduct and dishonesty".

The party could then become impaled on the same kind of difficulty the Commons Standards and Privileges Committee has faced - how can a body which is not a court of law judge allegations of "misconduct and dishonesty" without an open process of prosecution and cross-examination, and full appeal?

When tipping is an issue of high ethics

I WOULD NOT, I decided, leave it until the end of the meal to work out the tip. Tipping is in the news this week because the Low Pay Commission has recommended that, when it comes to the new minimum wage, tips should be included in the calculation as to what makes up the minimum £3.60 an hour. So at dinner on Thursday I resolved to think about it early on.

Indeed, I went further, and enlisted a bit of assistance by inviting a moral philosopher and an economist to eat with me.

At one of London's currently modish restaurants, Villandry — minimalist decor and French provincial food sprinkled with fashionable touches of Japan and Italy — I therefore arrived with Professor Len Shackleton, head of the Business School at Westminster University, and the theologian Julie Clague, currently at Jesus College, Cambridge, who teaches ethics at St Mary's University College.

We began with first principles. Why do we tip at all? I asked as we scrutinised the menu. But the others had opening questions too. How does the tipping system exactly work? asked the economist. Do the waiters, the people who actually render the service, actually get the money? asked the theologian in what she described as a "hermeneutic of suspicion".

Now facts are a dangerous basis for any discussion in either ethics or economics, let alone in a dialogue between a

PAUL VALLEY'S
BRITAIN
Villandry restaurant,
London

one-off encounters," began the economist. "Waiters, taxi drivers and, abroad, toilet attendants. We give to people who perform personal services."

"Tipping is an anachronism," said the theologian. "A relic of the master-servant relationship. It is also a form of moral blackmail."

"So you take a high moral stance on this," said the economist. Battle had commenced.

"No, I conform to social pressure. I don't want to be thought mean. But I think the practice will eventually die out."

The economist disagreed. "If it's a relic of class why is it so big in the US and Australia? It's an exchange to smooth social intercourse in situations where relations with strangers might embarrass."

The peppered skate and butter squash risotto arrived before the issue could be resolved. We turned to the minimum wage, on which the professor was due to give a paper the next day at a conference for the right-wing think-tank, the Institute of Economic Affairs.

I had invited Bharti Patel, the director of the Low Pay Unit, to join us too. Though she was unable to come she had offered a contribution to kick off the debate. It concerned cleaners and nursery nurses who get £1.50 an hour, and one employee at Burger King who effectively got 20p an hour because he had to clock off when he wasn't serving anyone. As Winston Churchill had once warned, we now ran the risk of the good employer being undercut by the bad, and the bad by the worse.

The United States, pointed out the theologian, had not been impeded by a minimum wage, which had been in force there since Roosevelt introduced it in 1938. "People here say it will destroy jobs, but they said that about equal pay for women and it didn't. In any case a minimum wage has a symbolic importance."

"Look," said the prof, "I don't want to be seen as the ogre here. There may be a case for a minimum wage. After all for a large chunk of history people thought it fitting to lay down laws about fair wages and just prices. It goes back to Babylonian days. It's in the Code of Hammurabi. All I'm saying is that it throws up practical problems and distortions which you have to deal with."

"Look," said the theologian, "work is a good. Meaningful employment is better than watching daytime television. But people need to be paid properly. Morality doesn't have to be naive. We do need to avoid economic distortions so it is not the fact of the minimum wage which is to be debated, but the level at which it's fixed."

The conversation seemed dangerously close to consensus. So, I asked, should we pay the tip in cash?

Cash, said the economist. Because it maximises the waiter's economic options.

Cash, said the theologian. Because, though in a fallen world it could encourage tax avoidance, cash would empower the staff and increase their moral choice.

But when the bill returned the credit card slip was printed to include the service charge. We could ask for it to be redone, deleting the charge so we could tip in cash, I said, but that might be embarrassing.

Quite, said the theologian. Indeed, agreed the economist. Ethics were one thing, but embarrassment was quite another. So we paid, and smiled and left, in the approved English manner.



Tips for living at London's Basil Street hotel: should waiters rely on tips to earn a minimum wage?

Photograph: Philip Meech

MARKS & SPENCER STRAWBERRIES

The Cream of the Crop.



"Tipping is an anachronism, a relic of the master-servant relationship"

practitioner of each. But I took the risk, as we tucked into our starters of revealing the results of a quick telephone survey I had conducted in which I quizzed a range of restaurants on their tipping practices.

Statistics showed, I announced, that they were now fairly evenly divided between those who imposed an "optional" service charge (12.5 per cent is the norm) and those who left it for the customer to decide. In most the tips do go to the staff, though in a few the kitchen staff get a share, and in some the management take a cut.

Tips that are paid in cash tend to be shared on the day. But the vast majority are added on to credit card slips, and are generally paid through the staff's pay packets and are therefore subject to tax and national insurance.

Some restaurants pay low wages (£12.50 for an eight hour shift was the meanest I encountered, with tips taking it up to £30 or £35). Others pay as much as £7 an hour as an incentive to get staff to stay with the firm; but then the full tip does not always go to the waiter.

"Tipping is largely about

Prehistoric canoe found in quarry

ONE OF the largest prehistoric dugout canoes found in Britain has been unearthed — but was broken up by quarry workers before they realised what it was.

The vessel, 12-14 metres long, sunk with half a ton of freight of stone blocks in a flood surge 3,300 years ago. It is the first prehistoric boat to be found complete with its cargo.

At first workers at Shardlow Arc gravel quarry in Derbyshire thought the boat was an old tree trunk and during quarrying work it was broken into three parts.

But later Roger Selby, an excavator driver, realised that it was no ordinary log but a dugout canoe.

Archaeologists were called in and a second piece was found. So far 11 metres of the

BY DAVID KEYS

vessel have been recovered. The one missing piece, the stern, is thought to be between one and three metres long.

Experts say the boat would have been paddled or punted. Its pointed bow was 25 per cent higher than the rest of the vessel, a feature reminiscent of dugout canoes in the Pacific and in North America.

Over the past few centuries some 200 dugout canoes have been found in Britain, but most were medieval. The vessel is now being worked on by archaeologists led by Dr Chris Salisbury and Daryl Garton of Nottingham University.

Work on the site has revealed the existence of a prehistoric settlement, which was probably on an island.

Russian church throws Tsar's burial into chaos

THOSE CLAMOURING for the reburial of the remains of the last Tsar, Nicholas II, in the hope of closing a painful and divisive chapter in Russia's history face profound disappointment.

Just over a month before the bones of the Tsar and members of the imperial family are to be interred in St Petersburg, the ceremony shows no sign of offering a shred of - as psychologists put it - "closure" to this disorientated society.

BY PHIL REEVES
in Moscow

The Russian Orthodox Church has ruled that neither Patriarch Alexy II, nor any bishop may attend the event. The Kremlin has indicated that, in the absence of the head of the Church, Boris Yeltsin is also unlikely to take part in the ceremony on 17 July, the 80th anniversary of the execution of the Tsar and his family by a Bol-

shevik firing squad in Yekaterinburg.

Relatives of the imperial family are divided over whether to attend, but the most senior member, Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna, has said she may not. Anxious that a display of regal pomp and circumstance might deepen social tensions among millions of impoverished Russians (many of them Communist voters), the authorities in St Petersburg

say less than \$2m will be spent on the event.

"What started as an attempt to find reconciliation has turned into another source of division," said Lawrence Uzzell, an expert on Russian Orthodoxy with the Keston Institute in Britain.

"It looks as if it is going to leave a sour taste in everybody's mouth. No one is going to be happy."

The church's decision is os-

tensibly because of doubts over the authenticity of the bones. Despite positive DNA tests carried out in Russia, Britain and the United States, some clergymen remain unconvinced. They regard the issue as crucial, as the church is considering canonising the Tsar. If he is granted sainthood - and Russian ecclesiastical opinion over this is also divided - the bones would become holy relics. A mistake would be disastrous.

"We would be venerating false relics," said one senior churchman, Metropolitan Yuvnali. "That would be a great sacrilege."

Matters are also complicated by the existence of other relics purporting to be Romanov remains, which are venerated by the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad - the church-in-exile during Soviet times. Admitting the authenticity of the bones soon to be

buried in St Petersburg means acknowledging their own relics are phoney.

The church will, however, play some role in the Tsar's reburial. Bishops may be absent, but a priest will still officiate at the service in St Petersburg's Peter and Paul Cathedral. The synod has decided to hold fasts and prayers in churches across the country - though it has emphasised that this will be to mark the murder of the Ro-

manovs, not their reburial. A statement will be read out to worshippers stressing the church's desire for accord.

This has not deterred Yuri Luzhkov, the mayor of Moscow who lobbied for the bones to be buried in the Russian capital. A likely contender to succeed Mr Yeltsin, he has condemned St Petersburg's reburial plans as "too meagre". "This ceremony will not be accepted by Russia," he declared this week.

Assault charge for Mr Violence

BY DAVID USBORNE
in New York

QUENTIN TARANTINO, the master of movie violence, himself faces third-degree assault charges.

The director, whose triumphs, depending on your taste and squeamishness, include *Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction*, and who is currently starring in a Broadway thriller, *Wait Until Dark*, could face a year in prison if the charges are proved.

They stem from a fracas in a Manhattan restaurant in May. Angered by intrusions on his privacy, Mr Tarantino allegedly struck Leila Mwagui, 25, a fashion stylist, in the face with a punch meant for her photographer boyfriend, Barron Claiborne.

Mr Tarantino surrendered to police in New York's East Village on Thursday evening, after they announced that criminal charges were to be filed. He then left the police station for his regular performance on Broadway.

Ms Mwagui has already filed for civil damages. Her suit, filed in the Manhattan Supreme Court, seeks \$5m (£3m) in compensatory damages and \$10m in punitive damages. Those are tidy sums, given that the most she apparently suffered was a cut forehead.

A lawyer for Mr Tarantino, Paul Callan, was predictably scornful of the criminal charges. He suggested that they were being pursued by the stylist to buttress her civil case.

"This is celebrity stalking of the worst possible kind," he said.

For Mr Tarantino, the charges only add insult to a fairly injurious sojourn in Manhattan. His performance alongside Marisa Tomei in *Wait Until Dark* was panned by theatre critics.



Pro-democracy activists called for an end to military rule in demonstrations in Lagos yesterday, but troops firing into the air and riot police unleashing tear gas sent a clear signal to the opponents of General Abdulsalam Abubakar, Nigeria's new military boss: Muscle still rules in Nigeria.

Iron fist still rules in Lagos

PRO-DEMOCRACY activists called for an end to military rule in demonstrations in Lagos yesterday, but troops firing into the air and riot police unleashing tear gas sent a clear signal to the opponents of General Abdulsalam Abubakar, Nigeria's new military boss: Muscle still rules in Nigeria.

Faced with his first major test Gen Abubakar responded with enough force to quell any hopes of a meaningful anti-government demonstration.

Police arrested Gani Fawehinmi, a lawyer and leading dissident who organised the protests. They also arrested Dupe Abiola, one of the wives of the imprisoned businessman Moshood Abiola, the pre-

BY FRANK MARTINS
in Lagos

sumed winner of cancelled 1993 elections.

Mr Fawehinmi, arriving at the scene of one of protests, was lifted on to the shoulders of his supporters, but police were so enraged when the crowd began to cheer that Fawehinmi was then arrested along with the men carrying him.

Pro-democracy activists in Africa's most populous nation had promised a day of action to protest against the new military regime, installed last Tuesday following the sudden death of Gen Abubakar's predecessor, General Sani Abacha.

On the anniversary of pres-

idential elections annulled by the army five years ago, they called for the release of political prisoners, focusing on Chief Abiola, who was detained in 1994 on treason charges for declaring himself the victor.

"The only acceptable option for the military is the immediate termination of military rule, installation of a government of national unity to be headed by Chief Abiola and the convocation of a sovereign national conference," said a spokesman for the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO), one of a plethora of south-western groups opposed to military rule.

The armed forces had seemed anxious. Schools and universities were closed in sev-

eral parts of the country. General Muhammad Marwa, the military administrator of Lagos state, formerly the seat of government but much marginalised by General Abacha and the main centre of resistance to his rule, had appealed for calm and patience. His police chief, Alhaji Abubakar Tsav, was more direct. "Anyone who engages in any public act capable of breaking the law will be seriously dealt with," he warned.

For the most part Lagos was quiet, with many workers choosing to protest by staying away from work. "I want democracy but I don't want trouble," said one street vendor. "Maybe we should give this new guy a chance." At another

small rally in the northern town of Kaduna, protesters carried banners that read, "No fuel, no water, no work, no medicine, military must go now." The demonstration was reported to have passed off peacefully.

Gen Abubakar has still to establish his position four days after finding himself the compromise choice of a divided military. "The next days are crucial," said a western diplomat in the capital, Abuja, "at the moment things could still go either way."

Amidst a swirl of speculation in diplomatic circles, Defence Headquarters took the extraordinary step of issuing a statement denying that anything untoward was taking place. "The rumour that

some people are under arrest and there is insurrection in Abuja is a lie peddled by a few disgruntled elements to cause problems for the new administration," said army spokesman, Colonel Godwin Ugo.

In a brief address to the nation earlier this week, the new head of state committed himself to General Abacha's programme to restore civilian government, but did not say whether this would happen by 1 October, as planned. He said nothing about the fate of more than 100 political prisoners, fuelling speculation about the continuing strength and influence within government of those officers loyal to General Abacha.

Cloud of radiation alarms France

BY JOHN LICHFIELD
in Paris

SCIENTISTS are baffled by a cloud of radioactivity which passed over the south of France and parts of Switzerland and Italy 10 days ago. On the 2 and 3 June, the amount of caesium 137 in the atmosphere over the French Mediterranean coast rose to 2,000 times normal. None of the pollution reached the ground and safety authorities insist that there was no threat to human health. But there is deep concern in France that the source of the pollution should be identified.

A leak, or a fire, at a nuclear power station has been ruled out because such an incident would have released a mixture of radioactive materials, not a cloud of pure caesium 137. Contamination of the atmosphere from the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests has also been excluded. "At present, we are confronted with a scientific enigma," Professor Jean-François Lacroix, president of the French nuclear safety institute, said yesterday. "We can only speculate."

Caesium 137 is used in some industrial processes and in hospitals. One theory is that a batch of it might have been accidentally dumped into an incinerator. Another possibility, given the direction of the wind, is an undeclared accident aboard a ship in the Mediterranean.

To put the pollution in perspective, Swiss authorities said it was 10,000 times less dense than the contamination from the Chernobyl nuclear accident in 1986. French nuclear safety agencies have launched an investigation with the French meteorological office and the World Health Organisation to try to identify the likely source of the pollution.

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Sudan Appeal Line 01865 313131

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IN BRIEF

Gay sailor wins compensation

THE United States navy and America's biggest Internet provider, America Online (AOL), have agreed compensation for a naval officer who faced dismissal, with no benefits, on grounds of homosexuality.

Master Chief Petty Officer, Timothy McVeigh, 36, earlier won a lawsuit in which he claimed gross breach of his privacy. AOL had confirmed to the navy the identity of an Internet user called "Tim", who described himself as gay, in violation of its privacy assurances. Under the settlement, McVeigh, who has 18 years of honourable service, will receive full benefits, his legal fees paid, and an undisclosed sum in compensation.

'Titanic' death

A NORWEGIAN woman imitating a scene from the movie *Titanic*, played by Kate Winslet, lost her grip on the railing of the *Queen of Scandinavia* ferry and plunged 65ft into the ocean off western Sweden, the Oslo newspaper *Dagbladet* reported yesterday. The woman, identified as being in her thirties, vanished and is presumed dead.

Bosnia's poll

BOSNIAN Muslim leader Alija Izetbegovic, 73, has said he would run in September's elections to stay in Bosnia's three-man presidency, after saying a month ago that he would step down.

Sex case costs Mitsubishi \$34m

BY MARY DEJEVSKY
in Washington

SANDRA Rushing was 21 when she got a job at the Mitsubishi plant in Normal, Illinois. But her tasks on the assembly line soon turned into a nightmare.

While she was at her work, station men would gather round her, touch her breasts and fondle her between her legs. Sometimes they drew pictures of her engaged in sexual activity, put her name on them and stuck them onto the cars in the assembly line.

One night, four men ordered her to have sex with them and threatened to rape her if she refused.

Yesterday, the American subsidiary of Mitsubishi Motors paid dear for the regime of sexual harassment it was deemed to have tolerated for years at Normal. In a landmark settlement, the company agreed to pay more than \$34m to settle a long-running sexual harassment suit involving hundreds of the company's female workers.

The case, which was brought by the US government's Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on behalf of more than 300 women, set a record, both for the number of claimants and the amount agreed.

The amount of money that each of the women will receive will depend on the gravity of her allegations, but could be up to \$300,000. The settlement, as a whole, has still to be approved by the judge in the case, but is thought unlikely to be rejected.

The EEOC instituted the lawsuit in April 1994, accusing the company of allowing 300 women employees to be subjected to groping, indecent jokes and lewd behaviour while they were working on the assembly line at the Mitsubishi car plant in Normal.

A number of women had also accused male managers of demanding sexual favours as a condition of addressing other complaints about working conditions and shift patterns.

This is the second sexual harassment suit settled by Mitsubishi in America. Last August, the company agreed undisclosed compensation for 27 women who had brought their own case.

The principle established by both settlements is that the company bears responsibility both for setting the tone of the workplace and for the behaviour of its managers and employees.

There had been persistent allegations of sexual intimidation and harassment at Mitsubishi since 1992. Women workers claimed male workers and supervisors kissed and fondled them, called them "whores", "bitches" and other obscene names, displayed pornographic drawings of the women that were clearly identifiable, and took revenge on women who refused their advances.

One male worker was alleged to have talked frequently of wanting to kill women while they performed oral sex on him. Others passed round photos of women performing sex acts with animals. Two men tied one woman worker's hands and feet to a cart and pushed her around the plant. Another woman had her hair cut off.

The EEOC, in its evidence, said that the managers at the plant, which employs 4,000 people, condoned these practices, sometimes took part in them, or did nothing to stop them. It



Takashi Sonobe, president of Mitsubishi, announces the settlement. The company neither admitted nor denied that women workers were harassed.

claimed that sexual harassment at the Normal plant was "repeated, routine, generalised, serious, pervasive and known to be supported by management".

It had been particularly riled by the action of the company, just after the EEOC had lodged its lawsuit on behalf of the US government, in financing buses to take 2,000 workers and managers to Chicago for a demonstration against the EEOC.

Initially, there had appeared to be great reluctance on the part of the US authorities to support a lawsuit, in part because the company was a joint venture and because the top managers were Japanese. This held the risk of a racist overtone at a time

when Japanese investment in the US was being encouraged and Japanese work-practices were being widely praised.

Sensing the toughening of the US government attitude in 1996, shortly after the EEOC took up the complaints, Mitsubishi in America launched its own internal review of working practices and engaged a former US Labour Secretary, Lynn Martin, to conduct it. But lawyers for the women complainants said the review would achieve nothing because the women would not trust someone in the pay of management.

After the announcement of this week's settlement, the chairman of the EEOC, Paul

Igasaki, warned that the commission would take a similarly hard line with other companies that allowed unacceptable treatment of women employees.

"Make no mistake about it," he said, "the Mitsubishi situation is not unique and no employer should assume that it can't happen in any company. Other employers should take heed. The EEOC will aggressively pursue problems like this."

Although Mitsubishi did not admit any of the allegations contained in the lawsuit, it did not deny them, and the executive vice-president of Mitsubishi Motor Manufacturing of America, Kohei Ikuta, offered an apology to the women involved.

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SA planned chemical war on blacks

Wouter Basson, the former head of South Africa's biological and chemical weapons programme, codenamed Project Jota, arriving at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings yesterday



SOME TIME in the late 1980s, in a cottage south of London, a South African scientist called Jan Lourens met a British contact he knew only as "Trevor" to hand over vials of a deadly poison.

Mr Lourens had a company called Protechnik, which began by making protective clothing to withstand chemical attacks, but at the behest of the apartheid regime's undercover forces, branched out into gadgetry that included umbrellas with poisoned tips, soap boxes packed with explosives and a walking stick that could fire poisonous pellets. He was never told what they were for, but he was no illusion that it was to assassinate the enemies of white rule.

Nor did Mr Lourens ask Trevor who he was or what the poison would be used for. But in the cottage near Ascot, the scientist accidentally spilled some of the poison on the back of his hand and, without thinking, wiped his hand on his mouth. Immediately he collapsed to the floor, on the edge of consciousness. He saved himself from death by crawling to the bathroom and swallowing most of a bottle of disinfectant, which caused him to vomit up the poison.

"It sounds like a James Bond film," commented a member of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), before whom Mr Lourens was testifying. The scientist admitted that this was so, but his evidence was not even the most lurid to emerge this week.

Since Monday, the TRC has been hearing of the search for a bacterium that would sterilise blacks without affecting whites, a research programme to see if hallucinogenic drugs such as mandrax, an amphetamine, and ecstasy could be combined with teargas and used for riot control, and attempts to kill apartheid opponents by poisoning their clothing.

According to one scientist, there was even talk of poisoning Nelson Mandela with thallium before releasing him from prison, to incapacitate him mentally.

The catalogue of racist paranoia and twisted science paraded before the TRC this week is the most shocking evidence it has heard, according to its chairman, Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Shortly before the end of white rule, Project Jota - the programme to develop chemical and biological weapons - appears to have employed dozens of scientists and research bodies on a plethora of projects. So much money was being spent that many of the private-sector researchers ended up rich.

So sensitive is some of the information emerging in the hearings that the government sought at the beginning of the week to have them held in camera. But Archbishop Tutu argued that the public should hear about the ideology behind Project Jota.

The commission had been due to hear yesterday from the head of the entire programme, Wouter Basson, but there was a delay while his lawyers argued that the session might prejudice cases being brought against him in the courts.

Mr Basson, a scientist with an international reputation,

BY RAYMOND WHITAKER
in Johannesburg

had attracted the attention of security services abroad; according to some reports, he was arrested early last year after a tip-off from the CIA that he was preparing to leave South Africa. When detectives went to his home he fled into a nearby park, apparently fearing that they were foreign agents who had been sent to kill him. On him at the time were large quantities of mandrax.

The former head of police forensics in South Africa, Lothar Neethling, told the commission yesterday that Mr Basson was briefed to produce riot-control equipment containing mood-altering drugs, and was therefore supplied with 200,000 mandrax tablets as well as significant quantities of LSD and marijuana. The TRC's legal officer, Banif Vally, put it to Mr Neethling that the purpose of the research on drugs was to create widespread addiction among blacks, asking: "What better crowd control than to have an enslaved youth?"

The scientist said the research was "for the good of society", to find non-lethal methods of crowd control.

Other scientists have testified how Mr Basson swept aside their doubts about the work they were doing - work which included producing chocolates laced with botulism, cigarettes infected with anthrax and whisky mixed with weedkiller. One said he had been asked to investigate claims that a scientist in Europe had discovered a bacterium which hindered fertility among blacks, but inquiries had been dropped for fear that it was a trap set by foreign intelligence agencies.

Frank Chikane, a cleric and now a close adviser to President Nelson Mandela, survived after his underpants were laced with paroxane, because he flew to the US and quickly received hospital treatment. But, in another case, when government agents poisoned the shirt of an exiled activist, a friend who borrowed the shirt died. Scientists also worked on infecting food with anthrax and beer with thallium, a poison which can cause mental retardation. It was claimed three Russians advising the ANC in exile had their food laced with anthrax spores, and one died.

Schalk van Rensburg, a former director of a company called Rooideplaat Research Laboratories, which produced more than 500 items for Project Jota, said his superior, Andre Immanuel, told him of plans to give Mr Mandela thallium. "The intention, I understood, was to reduce his level of intellectuality and effectiveness by inducing brain damage," said Mr van Rensburg.

The suggestion was that it would be convenient if the future president, who was about to be released after 26 years in prison, did not last long, or at least appeared to have lost some of his mental capacity. There is no suggestion that the plot was ever carried out, but Mr van Rensburg said he had been told that the black consciousness leader Steve Biko had been given thallium before he died in police custody in 1977.

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Guns fall silent on the Horn of Africa

THE GUNS fell silent in the conflict between Ethiopia and neighbouring Eritrea yesterday, while the two governments continued their salvos of blame for the clashes.

American and Rwandan diplomats were shuttling between the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa and the Eritrean capital Asmara to try to help resolve the conflict.

People fled the Ethiopian town of Adigrat after Eritrean helicopters and planes bombed the town on Thursday, killing four civilians and wounding 30. They hastily buried two victims of the raid before dawn so they could leave town. The other two were so disfigured they could not be identified. The wounded still filled beds lining the corridors of Adigrat's hospital,

where over 100 wounded soldiers are also being treated.

The Eritrean government said it had bombed the town because the Ethiopians had turned it into "the main garrison for reinforcing the invading Ethiopian army and a centre for army logistics".

But an Ethiopian spokeswoman in Addis Ababa the attack was "an act of desperation" after Eritrean forces were "heavily defeated" in ground fighting on two fronts on Thursday.

Meanwhile, the Ethiopian army poured reinforcements into the front lines south of Zala Ambessa, 10 days after Eritreans captured the town.

A commander in the area said he expected a fresh Eritrean offensive there.

DONALD MACINTYRE

Liz Symons' publicity has fostered the image of a Chanel-clad, politically weightless, New Labour princess. The reality is very different

SATURDAY REVIEW, PAGE 5

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هكذا من الأصل

Imams strive to stay out of Kosovo's war

HIGH ABOVE the gently swaying linden tree, the Mig-29s daggered through the sky. The courtyard of the little white-washed mosque beside the Faculty of Islamic Studies echoed and crashed with the roar of the jets - you could see them, arrow-headed, flicking behind the leaves, suddenly black against the white summer clouds - but the clutch of Albanian Muslim students stood unmoved by their school notice board.

Islamic madrasahs have flourished in Kosovo - save for Tito's suppression in 1945 - since the 16th century; the Yugoslav Air Force's response to Nato's Albanian air manoeuvres was not going to interrupt their studies yesterday.

Yet this must be one of the few Muslim societies in the world that emphasises its lack of political ambition. As Jaber Hamiti, the faculty's general secretary, puts it: "The struggle for Kosovo is a national one and has its roots in history - it is not a religious war."

No call for jihad will ever come from the 15th-century Djamila Mathe mosque round the corner; no imam will ever call the Albanians of Pristina to turn against their Christian, Orthodox neighbours. Or so we are told.

Hasamiti - dark-haired, with big friendly spectacles, perhaps no more than 25 - admits the Serbs themselves have already tried to turn this into a religious war. "They will soon talk about mujahedin," his taciturn colleague says. Wrong. The Serbs are already claiming to have captured 50 "holy warriors" of Islam in the fighting around Decani - an allegation they hastily abandoned when we asked for details.

Not that the religious authorities ignore the lessons of the war in Kosovo. Two years ago, their religious magazine *Dituria Islame* (Islamic Knowledge) carried front-page pho-

BY ROBERT FISK
in Pristina

tographs of a starving Bosnian Muslim in a Serb concentration camp and an Albanian boy who had had the Serb cross carved on his bare chest with a knife. Recent issues have headlined the destruction of the homes of ethnic Albanians in western Kosovo. But Imam Sabri Bajgora, who is also a high-school teacher, insists Islam must not become part of Albanian politics.

"We are aware the Serbian regime is very close to the Orthodox church, though in a covert way," he says. "We saw this especially in Bosnia - when the Serb archbishop went to Bosnia and congratulated the Serb soldiers for what they had done there."

Imam Bajgora raises his voice as another Mig-29 arcs through the sky high above the school courtyard. "Here in Kosovo, the church works together with the regime in saying that this is the Serb holy land. Yet in the past we Albanians have helped protect their churches, especially in the Decani area."

There is a firm belief on the part of Albanian Muslims that some Serb churches were built on the foundations of Albanian Orthodox ecclesiastical buildings, that Albanian Catholic families in Pec, Decani and Sali Pruste still fulfil their protective duty. Yet Mr Hamiti can name the location of mosques which he says have been vandalised by the Serbs in the past month: Decani, Carabreg, Vranoc, Ratkoc, Ijubenic...

"This war has national and political features - but no religious features at all," he says. "When our imam preaches at Friday prayers, he tells his followers that they should understand this is a war in which they must defend their families and homes and belongings - Albanian Catholic priests say

the same thing. The only difference is that the imam bases his words on the Koran, the priest on the Bible."

In one way, a conversation with Islamic officials in Kosovo parallels any meeting with a Serb. We go back into Slavic and Illyrian history, to the battle of Kosovo Field in 1389 - a glorious Serb defeat in the struggle against oppressive Islam, according to the Serbs; a Serb-Albanian Muslim coalition against the Ottoman Turks, according to the Albanians - and to the Second World War. Did the Italian occupiers not flood Kosovo with Albanians, the Serbs ask? Did Albanians not fight for freedom against fascism, the Albanians ask? Here the Albanians are on weaker ground; Kosovo was not exactly a centre of Partisan recruitment against the Nazis.

Even the statistics are disputed. Do Albanians constitute 90 per cent of the population of Kosovo, or 92 per cent? Of these, are Muslims 98 per cent of all Albanians - with a mere 2 per cent Albanian Catholics - or less?

Of the 18 professors of Islam at the Pristina college, 10 were trained in the Arab world, mostly at the Al-Azhar university in Cairo, but others in Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Libya. Yet Mr Hamiti says they have never sought - or received - financial or other help from the Arab Muslim world. "We are independent," he says.

In Kosovo's provincial capital, no mosque has been built since the Second World War. Elez Osmani, editor of the *Dituria Islame* magazine, says Albanian Muslims have been disappointed by the failure of the Orthodox church to raise its voice against massacres in Bosnia and Kosovo. "The head of their church has been one of the triggers of the war," he says coldly. "He lavished praise on the Serb 'warriors' who are now labelled war criminals by

the international community." "As for us, it remains a national issue. Of course, when there is a crisis like this one, people more and more pray to God; when you lose hope, you become more religious."

Another jet cuts through the sky. Our conversation slips back into history again, to the Congress of Berlin.

"The Serbs made big pro-

paganda there and called us Arnauts [paid Turkish recruits] - and to the League of Prizren, when 'Albanianism' was born amid calls for autonomy within the Ottoman empire. 'If you could look through the archives of the Serb secret police here, you would find thousands of Albanians sentenced for political crimes,' Mr Osmani says.

"They were not imprisoned be-

cause they were Muslims, but because they wanted liberty. And it will be achieved."

Outside, the courtyard is filled with the smell of linden blossom and the sound of fighter bombers. The frailty of nature against the power of technology. And yes, it would be pleasant to believe that Imam Bajgora, Jaber Hamiti and Elez Osmani could maintain their

secular politics in the face of this increasingly brutal war. Iran, Palestine, Afghanistan, Egypt and Algeria all suggest otherwise. Just round the corner, I stop outside a beautiful mosque with a decorated wooden porch. "This is our opportunity," the imam is telling the men kneeling before him in Albanian. Then he reads from the Koran.

Prayers at a mosque in Pristina, where Muslim leaders are struggling to keep the war a secular affair

Marleen Daniels/Gamma

Milosevic under pressure

THE LEADING world powers last night issued a four-point list of demands to Slobodan Milosevic for an end to the bloody crisis in Kosovo, only for Russia to break ranks by opposing any use of force by Nato to end the Serb offensive.

Three days before a trip by the Yugoslav President to Moscow, Russia also refused to join a ban imposed by the other five members of the contact group - Britain, the US, France, Italy and Germany - on flights by Yugoslav airlines to and from their countries.

The Russian foreign minister, Yevgeny Primakov, yesterday described as "potentially decisive" the talks he and President Boris Yeltsin will hold with Mr Milosevic next week. But he reiterated Russia's long-standing hostility to Nato airstrikes or any other military intervention.

The demands made by foreign ministers of the contact group, chaired by Robin Cook, are: An end to repressive action by Serb forces against the civilian Albanian population and the withdrawal of these units; unimpeded access for international monitors and observers; measures to help up to 50,000 displaced people to return home; and "rapid progress" in talks with the Kosovo Albanian leadership.

At the same time, Nato warned the Kosovo Liberation Army not to seek to take advantage of any Nato intervention. If they continued to operate once this had started, Nato would cease all military operations forthwith.

The key to events now lies largely in Moscow and the meeting between Presidents Yeltsin and Milosevic. There are two uncertainties: whether the Russians will present yesterday's contact group demands as forcefully as the other members would like; and, even more fundamental - over the extent of the influence which Russia has over events in Yugoslavia. On past form, Mr Milosevic will indulge in cat-and-mouse brinkmanship with the West until the last.

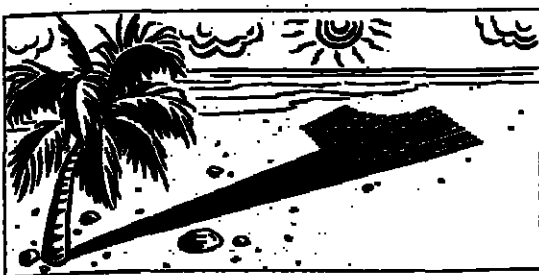
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Nuclear foes hit
by loans freeze

BY RUPERT CORNWELL

AS INDIA and Pakistan edged towards a resumption of peace talks, leading world powers yesterday announced a freeze on all non-humanitarian loans to the two countries in protest at their recent nuclear tests.

The freeze will be largely symbolic given the existing *de facto* halt to all IMF and World Bank lending, and India's finance minister, Yashwant Sinha, declared it would have no immediate effect. But for the Group of Eight industrial powers, which announced the move at a meeting in London yesterday, it is another signal of their determination to stop the accelerating nuclear arms race on the Subcontinent.

That campaign, launched with the swingeing US sanctions against India and Pakistan, has already notched up a small success with the announcement by both Delhi and Islamabad of test moratoria, after the combined 11 blasts conducted since mid-May.

Yesterday brought new hope of dialogue, as Pakistan offered to resume talks on 20 June, and

India countered with the date of 22 June. The jockeying itself is a measure of just how intractable is their dispute. But the G-8 foreign ministers professed encouragement that international pressure seemed to be yielding results.

The hard part is yet to come - somehow persuading the two south Asian rivals not only to return to the international fold by signing up the Comprehensive Test Ban treaty and the nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty, but to turn the latest feelers for talks into a real dialogue to reduce tensions.

A G-8 statement last night demanded that both countries cease threatening military movements and cross-border violations, and prevent terrorist activity, above all around the disputed territory of Kashmir, which the Pakistani foreign minister this week warned could ignite a nuclear conflict. Japan offered itself as a neutral site for peace talks, if the two sides so wished.



Pauline Hanson, One Nation party leader, is picked up by one of her growing number of fans, pig and dairy farmer John Potter, in northern Queensland

Hanson
revives
outback
racism

QUEENSLAND, Australia's "deep north", goes to the polls today in an election that has shaken the rest of Australia, thanks to the surging popularity of Pauline Hanson, a fringe politician who stands for racial policies that discriminate against the country's non-white minorities.

Australia thought it had got rid of the notorious "White Australia" policy. But Mrs Hanson, who comes from the Queensland town of Ipswich, wants to bring it back. She wants to close the door to Asian immigrants and to starve Aborigines out of public welfare spending. Up to 40 per cent of people in Queensland agree with her.

That is the level of support that Mrs Hanson and her party, One Nation, commanded yesterday in opinion polls in some Queensland constituencies, where farmers cheer her over her promise to abolish gun controls and to erect tariff barriers against their foreign competitors. When she swept through north Queensland on a whistle-stop tour of farming towns on Thursday, John Potter, a burly pig and dairy farmer, picked up Mrs Hanson in his arms as his mates gathered around. "My aim is just to give the Aussie a fair go again," she told them.

To Mrs Hanson, aged 44, the Aussie does not necessarily include Asian-born people, who comprise 5 per cent of the population, or indigenous Aborigines, who make up less than 1 per cent. Both groups have been the target of her invective since she was elected to the federal parliament in Canberra as an independent MP in 1996. In her maiden speech, she said Asian immigrants were "swamping" Australia, and attacked welfare spending on Aborigines and the 1993 law which recognised Aborigines' rights to "native title" over traditional lands. Last week she declared native title was "a precursor to the establishment of a number of taxpayer-funded Aboriginal states".

Mrs Hanson founded One Nation last year in Ipswich. The party disintegrated as a result of internal bickering and by late last year, Australians thought they had heard the last of her. The campaign for the state election in Queensland showed how wrong they were.

Opinion polls yesterday gave One Nation 18 per cent support across Queensland, and between 30 and 40 per cent in some rural constituencies. Mrs Hanson's formula is a mixture of simple-minded economics and racial bigotry. She promises to set up a rural bank to make loans to farmers at 2 per cent interest and pay for these and other schemes by abolish-

BY ROBERT MILLIKEN
in Sydney

ing state spending on Aborigines, the arts and greenhouse gas reductions.

Her platform also echoes a brand of right-wing populism imported from America, which blames Australia's economic problems and those of farmers in particular, on a conspiracy concocted by the United Nations, the World Bank and other international bodies.

One Nation's standing in the polls has spooked Queensland's ruling conservative coalition, comprising the Liberal and National parties. Under Australia's preferential voting system, the coalition has directed second-preference votes to One Nation candidates - ahead of the opposition Labor Party - in the hope of picking up support from the Hansonites in the final count. One Nation is giving second preference to coalition candidates in one-fifth of the seats it is contesting.

The apparent deal between mainstream conservatives and the Hanson fringe has caused a furor over the role of John Howard, the Prime Minister and head of the ruling Liberal-National coalition.

Mr Howard, who has indicated he will call a federal election later this year, has refused to direct the coalition parties in Queensland or on a federal level to give One Nation candidates their last voting preference.

When Mrs Hanson started her campaign two years ago, Mr Howard rejected calls to publicly condemn her. Now, the Prime Minister's lack of leadership is being blamed for letting "Hansonism" take root.

Some of the Liberal Party's old guard have attacked him, too. Malcolm Fraser, a former prime minister, said recently: "The Liberal and National parties have done Australia a great disservice... By no stretch of the imagination can the coalition parties claim One Nation policies are less harmful than those of the Australian Labor Party."

Australia's economy is strongly tied to that of Asia. Over the past week, the value of the Australian dollar has plunged as the impact of the Asian financial crisis starts to bite.

The negative impact of Mrs Hanson's rise on relations to Asia is the last thing Australia needs. But that is what seems to be happening. Hoa Trung Tran, a Vietnamese community leader in Queensland, said yesterday: "In the last 20 years we have worked very hard to build Australia's name as a friendly, open-minded country. We don't want Australia to become the big isolated continent."

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A thorn in the side of Palestine's 'mafia'

A WEEK IN THE LIFE
HUSAM KHADER IN NABLUS,
PALESTINE



Bryan
McBurney

HUSAM KHADER, a political militant from Balata refugee camp on the outskirts of the West Bank town of Nablus, is jubilant because he has just organised a successful strike. Arrested 23 times by Israel during the Palestinian Intifada, he is now leading 20,000 people from Balata against the local representatives of the Palestinian Authority.

Mr Khader, 36, a lively man with a quick smile, modest but confident, does not like the rulers of this Palestinian enclave, surrounded by Israeli-controlled territory.

"They are a mafia," he says. "They want to use the present situation to get rich. They hear only the symphony of dollars."

A member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Mr Khader explains that the strike was sparked off by the decision of Ghassan Shaka, mayor of Nablus, to double the price of electricity and water for the impoverished refugees in Balata. Mr Khader sees that as a symbol of the greed and corruption of the officials of the Palestinian Authority.

His two small daughters rush in and out of his office at the entrance to Balata as he outlines the events of the week leading up to the strike.

Other Palestinian politicians mutter about corruption in Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority. But few do anything about it. Mr Khader is also different from other critics in that he has clear popular support. People in Balata obviously think he can help.

The local municipal authority does not cut much ice in the camp. "We haven't allowed them to cut anybody's electricity for nine months," he says. "They even came to my office, but I sent a message to the mayor, saying: 'Don't you dare.'"

Mr Khader details the events that led up to the strike. On Monday, he holds a meeting of "the Committee for the Defence of Palestinian Refugees Rights". "We heard a senior official of the Palestinian Authority was coming to Balata to open a water project on Saturday. We decided to hold a strike and demonstration to greet him," he says.

"People are paying one-third of their salaries for electricity and water. The municipality buys it from Israel, doubles the price and sells it to us."

"It is even demanding back payment for the electricity bills we refused to pay the Israelis during the Intifada. We spoke to Arafat who promised not to take money from the refugee camps, but he did nothing."

"The mayor even sent a letter to the family of Saad Saal, a Palestinian martyr killed in the siege of Beirut in 1983, saying he would cut off their electricity unless they pay the money [the equivalent of £24] in 15 days. Part of the money goes to Arafat."

That evening Mr Khader addresses a meeting of 300 students from al-Najaa university. He says: "It was shameful for me. I had to duck a lot of questions about how al-Sharif died."

Mohiedin al-Sharif was the bombmaker the Palestinian Authority says was killed by fellow members of Hamas. Critics say he died at the hands of the Authority or the Israelis.

Husam Khader and his committee are making posters and slogans for their strike.

It is going to be the first in Nablus since the Israelis departed in 1995. The local committee of Fatah, Mr Arafat's organisation, in Balata has a slogan: "We shall resist the [Israeli] occupation as if there is no [Palestinian] Authority; And we shall fight against the

corruption of the Authority as if there was no occupation."

Mr Khader thinks this is brave of them. He refused to join the official list for Fatah in the 1995 elections, and was elected as an independent Fatah candidate.

A stream of people comes to Mr Khader's office for help.

One woman needs to pay for her daughter's eye operation. She has talked to Jibril Rajoub, head of Preventive Security on the West Bank. He will talk to Mr Arafat. Mr Khader laughs when asked if such a detail as this had to be decided by the Palestinian leader. He lifts up a glass of water, saying: "You don't even drink from this without his permission," he says.

In the evening Mr Khader addresses a woman's social club in Nablus. They are well-educated and middle class. He speaks of the bad relationship between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Palestine Legislative Council (PLC).

"I think the PA asks God every night to let it wake up one day without the PLC." Asked why the Authority is so authoritarian, he replies: "They got used to leading the PLO without sharing authority."

He himself spent three years in exile in Tunis with Mr Arafat. He supports a motion of no-confidence in the PLC on 15 June against the Palestinian government. In Nablus, he says, the local government is spending the money it raises in hotels and at receptions.

Thursday dawn and Mr Khader is leading a demonstration to the borders of Israel at Tulkarm to commemorate 50 years since al-Nakba, the Catastrophe, as the Palestinians call the loss of their homes in what is now Israel.

The people of Balata, a half square kilometre of ramshackle concrete houses separated by narrow alleys, come originally from 60 villages and towns between Jaffa and Lod. After 1948 they were not allowed to return.

Husam asks his four-year-old daughter Amira where she comes from. She says: "I live in Balata, but I come from Jaffa."

A middle-aged woman in a pink dress comes to see him. She shows her refugee identity card, which has the names of 12 family members on it. Her husband has died and somehow she is no longer on the right list to get support from UNWRA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency). Husam makes a phone call to the local UNWRA director to explain her problem.

Husam Khader goes to the mosque in Balata on Friday and addresses 1,000 people, calling on them to support the strike. Given that half the 6,000 people who could work in the camp are unemployed, the strike will most obviously affect the shopkeepers.

He is somewhat contemptuous of people in Nablus itself, who are also badly hit by the high price of electricity and water, but do nothing. "There are no men in Nablus," he says. Then he looks embarrassed and softens the phrase.

At 10am on Saturday he goes to the market place with other committee members. The shopkeepers say they are waiting to close at 11am, as instructed by the strike committee. When the hour comes the strike is total.

The visiting dignitaries are met by a large demonstration. Mr Khader is pleased. "Would anybody deny water and electricity to people as poor as this, unless they were at war with them?" he asks.

The price rises remain in place. Now he plans to cut the main road to Jerusalem.

PATRICK COCKBURN

FEARGAL KEANE

If I were a soccer team I would be lucky to be in the fourth division. If I were a country, I would be Albania or Guineau Bissau

SATURDAY REVIEW, PAGE 3

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BUSINESS

BRIEFING

Powerscreen lists disposals

ONE OF Northern Ireland's leading listed companies, Powerscreen International, yesterday announced a £50m disposal programme in an attempt to clear the slate after two profit warnings and the announcement of an inquiry by the Serious Fraud Office had put the firm's future in doubt. The SFO was involved after a report by KPMG had discovered overstated earnings and other irregularities at its Mafro aggregates business.

The planned disposals will be mainly in the materials handling business, leaving the group to concentrate on screening and crushing of rock, and will substantially clear outstanding debts, the company said yesterday. Managers who were alleged to have been aware of problems at Mafro as long ago as the middle of 1997 had now left the company. The shares rallied 30p to 100.5p but analysts warned that the delayed results for the year to 31 March are still likely to show a substantial loss.

The company warned at the time of the SFO enquiry that it faced losses of £10m in the year to 31 March. Last month a second warning forecast losses would be around £65m, including £20m attributable to earlier years.

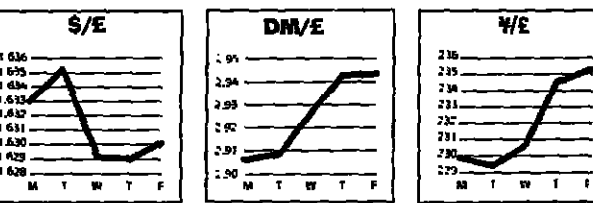
Osborne & Little rake it in

OSBORNE & LITTLE, the wallpaper and fabric designer, announced a £12m special dividend yesterday worth 20p per share. The pay-out, made from a £4.2m cash pile, is in addition to the standard annual dividend of 23p per share. Founders Sir Peter Osborne and Antony Little will be the main beneficiaries as they control 40 per cent of the company between them. Osborne & Little saw full year profits rise 9 per cent to £5.3m last year.

Watchdogs warn on warranties

TENS OF thousands of World Cup fans who have succumbed to this month's football mania and bought state-of-the-art television sets and videos, may have been bamboozled into paying hundreds of pounds for poor-value breakdown warranties for them. Consumer groups warn that such warranties are often far more expensive than protection available directly from manufacturers. Your Money section, Page 1.

STOCK MARKETS



Index	Close	Change	52 wk high	52 wk low	YTD %
FTSE 100	5769.80	-82.70	6130.50	4382.80	4.02
FTSE 250	5861.20	-55.80	6270.90	4384.20	3.02
FTSE 350	2821.10	-37.70	3132	2141.80	3.82
FTSE All Share	2761.31	-35.33	2872.04	2106.59	3.76
FTSE SmallCap	2756.00	-11.40	2793.80	2182.10	2.95
FTSE Fledgling	1502.70	-8.80	1517.10	1225.20	2.98
FTSE AIM	1133.80	-4.00	1146.90	965.90	1.09
FTSE EURO 100	1019.97	-26.91	1071.32	821.18	1.83
Dow Jones	8731.80	-78.72	9261.91	6971.32	1.01
Nikkei	15022.33	3.29	15022.33	14483.21	1.01
Hang Seng	7915.44	29.37	16820.31	7673.25	5.22
Dax	5670.83	-83.63	5787.70	3487.24	2.80

INTEREST RATES



Index	3 month	1 yr	5 yr	10 yr	15 yr	30 yr
UK	7.69	6.95	7.71	6.58	5.62	4.42
US	5.69	5.81	5.81	5.81	5.42	4.00
Japan	0.55	0.05	0.59	0.29	1.52	1.16
Germany	3.57	0.43	3.91	0.64	4.77	0.34

CURRENCIES

Index	Close	Change	Yr Ago	Index	Close	Change	Yr Ago
FTSE 100	5769.80	-82.70	6130.50	Dollar	1.6307	+0.17c	1.6348
Dow Jones	8731.80	-78.72	9261.91	Swiss	0.6132	-0.06p	0.6117
Nikkei	15022.33	3.29	15022.33	DM-Mark	1.8047	+0.04p	1.7264
Yen	235.27	+0.13	235.27	Yen	144.36	+0.21	144.32
Yen	104.80	0.00	99.60	Yen	113.30	0.00	102.40

OTHER INDICATORS

Index	Close	Change	Yr Ago	Index	Close	Change	Yr Ago
Brent Oil (\$)	11.56	0.04	16.99	GDP	114.70	2.90	111.47
Gold (\$)	285.95	-1.10	341.52	RPI	162.60	4.00	156.35
Silver (\$)	5.17	-0.14	4.74	Rate Rates	7.50	6.50	6.50

TOURIST RATES

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
Australia (\$)	2.6609	Medan (new peso)	12.90
Austria (schillings)	20.10	Netherlands (guilders)	3.2241
Belgium (francs)	59.12	New Zealand (\$)	3.1096
Canada (\$)	2.3319	Norway (krone)	12.18
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8368	Portugal (escudos)	200.61
Denmark (kroner)	10.95	Saudi Arabia (rials)	5.9383
Finland (markka)	8.7499	Singapore (\$)	2.7084
France (francs)	8.5993	Spain (pesetas)	242.46
Germany (marks)	2.8724	South Africa (rand)	8.2393
Greece (drachma)	486.51	Sweden (kronor)	12.76
Hong Kong (\$)	12.25	Switzerland (francs)	2.3750
Ireland (pounds)	1.1329	Thailand (bahts)	63.25
Israel (sheqels)	62.89	Turkey (liras)	41.0301
Italy (lira)	5.4920	USA (\$)	1.5920
Japan (yen)	230.18		
Malaysia (ringgits)	6.1890		
Malta (lira)	0.6213		

Rates for indication purposes only
Source: Thomas Cook

Tory MP calls for block on MacKenzie's radio bid

CHRIS SMITH, the culture secretary, will next week come under pressure to block the proposed takeover of commercial broadcaster Talk Radio by the former Sun editor Kelvin MacKenzie to run the radio station.

The prospect of a 'dumbing down' of Talk Radio's output with the radio equivalent of topless darts, news bunnies, and bouncing dwarves fills me with despair, he writes, referring to the features Mr MacKenzie introduced while he was chief executive of LIVE TV, the cable television station owned by Mirror Group.

Mr Winterton intends to raise the issue with Mr Smith and Margaret Beckett, the President of the Board of Trade, in the House of Commons on Tuesday. He has asked whether the Department of Trade and Industry has any plans to prevent the further expansion into British broadcasting by News International, and whether the competition authorities could intervene in the bid.

Mr Winterton also intends to ask Mr Smith what steps he is taking to promote "plurality and diversity of ownership within the UK media industries".

BY PETER THAL LARSEN

Mr Winterton, who is Chairman of the Commons All-Party Media Group, also questions the suitability of Mr MacKenzie to run the radio station.

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Chris Smith (left) will be pressured to block a bid for Talk Radio by former Sun editor Kelvin MacKenzie



international, the investment group which has a 35 per cent stake in the station.

Mr Murdoch is believed to have wanted to lure Mr MacKenzie from The Mirror, where he had begun to stabilise the troubled tabloid's circulation and threaten the pre-eminent position of the Sun.

However, Talk's managing director, Paul Robinson, is leading a management team planning to mount a rival bid for the station, which has been put up for sale by its majority shareholder, the Luxembourg-based media group CLIP-USA. He is expected to name his financial backers next week. Earlier this week, he questioned Mr MacKenzie's ability to run a radio station.

Talk Radio has been in dire financial difficulties ever since its launch. The station soon abandoned a downward "shock" approach in favour of a more sophisticated for-

mat in an attempt to win more listeners. However, it remains hamstrung by the £3.5m annual cash bid it submitted to win the licence. The station is believed to have lost close to £10m last year.

Nevertheless, experts believe Talk will fetch a price of up to £15m, partly because its licence can be renegotiated in two years' time, but also because it has a guaranteed berth on the national digital radio multiplex, applications for which are due in later this month.

This worries Mr Winterton, who argues that a successful bid by Mr MacKenzie would "fly in the face of Government policy objectives by giving Murdoch companies not only control of one of only three independent national radio stations, but also guaranteed access to digital capacity and potential control of a digital radio multiplex".

Father and son make £12m

BY PETER THAL LARSEN

A FATHER and son team will be £12m richer when their information technology recruitment consultancy comes to the stock market early next month.

Sales Engineering & Computer Consultants yesterday announced plans to join the market through the reverse takeover of Omnimedia, the former CD-ROM publisher which is now effectively a shell company.

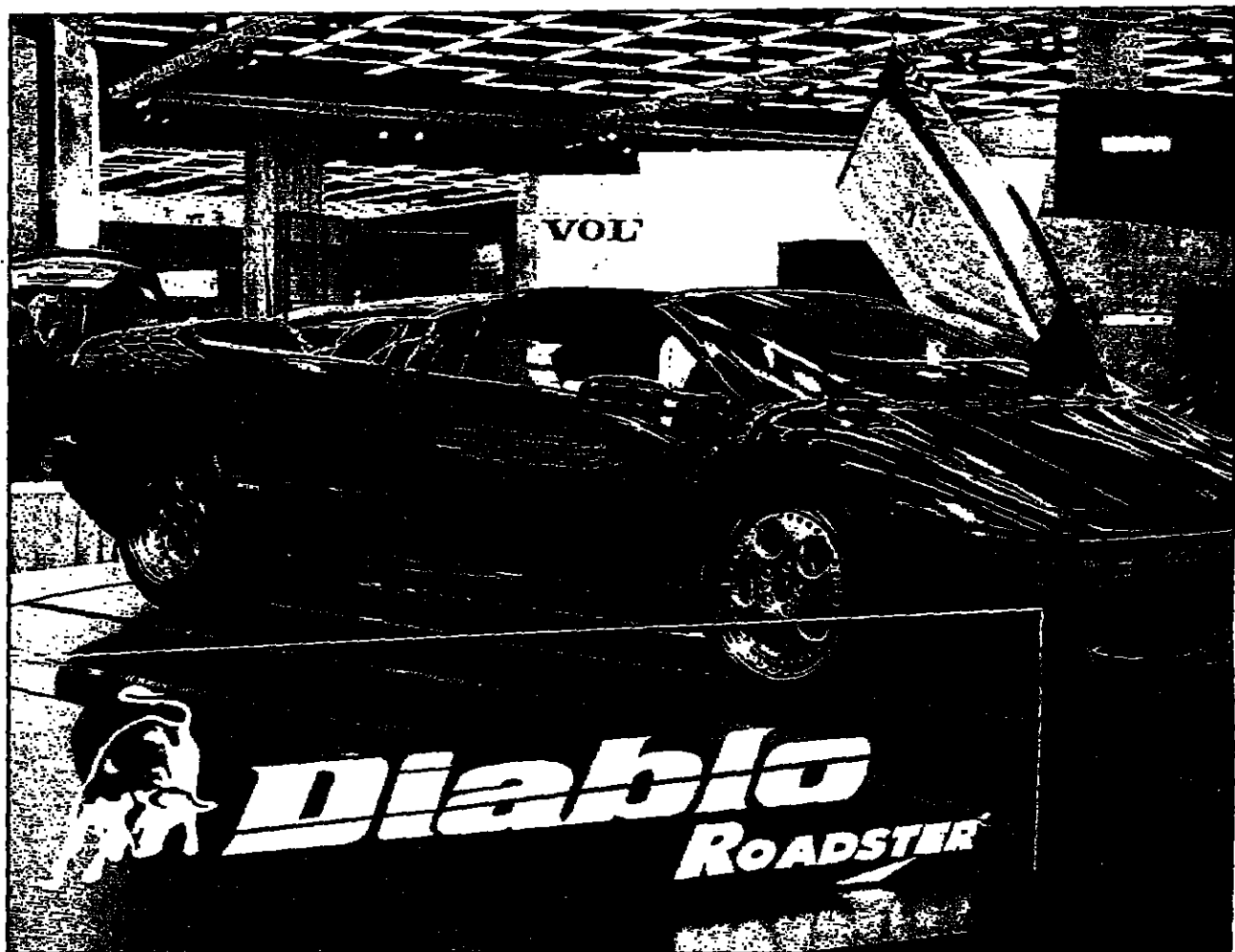
The sale will make multi-millionaires of chief executive Nick Reid and his father, Bernard. Following the takeover, Mr Reid Junior will hold a 58 per cent stake in the company which will be worth an estimated £11.6m. Meanwhile, his father is selling his 35 per cent shareholding, pocketing £8m in the process.

Mr Reid, 35, said his father had helped him to start the business with a £10,000 loan in 1987, but had never played an active role. He admitted that building up the company, which last year made pre-tax profits of £965,000, had been a "long hard slog".

He said that he had originally looked at floating the business, which will be renamed Systems International following the takeover, on the Alternative Investment Market. However, a reverse takeover proved to be cheaper. He said that Omnimedia also already holds a registration with the US Securities and Exchange Commission, making it easier for the company to pursue a listing on the Nasdaq stock exchange at some point in the future.

Systems International specialises in IT recruitment and consultancy services. It has a blue-chip customer base which includes Shell, SmithKline Beecham and Ciba Specialty Chemicals, a division of the Swiss drugs giant.

Mr Reid said the company was pursuing acquisitions, and was in talks with a business in the North of England. It is also pursuing new business in Switzerland, where it has made contacts with other drug firms.



The top-of-the-range Lamborghini Diablo Roadster, in Detroit two years ago

VW to buy Lamborghini from son of Suharto

BY MICHAEL HARRISON

THE GERMAN car maker Volkswagen added another luxury marque to its stable yesterday by agreeing to buy the Italian sports car maker Lamborghini.

VW, which bought Rolls-Royce Motor Cars a week ago for £430m, said it had signed a letter of intent to acquire Lamborghini from its controlling shareholder, the youngest son of the former Indonesian leader President Suharto.

The purchase is being handled through the VW subsidiary Audi, which is also buying the racing engine specialist Cosworth from Vickers.

No price was disclosed and Audi said the negotiations were likely to take several weeks, but analysts suggested Lamborghini would fetch between £30m and £70m.

The Bologna-based Lamborghini made only 220 of its Diablo range of high-performance coupes and open-top cars last year but has ambitions

to raise production to as many as 3,000. Earlier this year, it said it was looking for a European car maker to become its partner in making a Baby Diablo that would sell for about £65,000, or half the price of its biggest-selling Diablo SV. The top-of-the-range Diablo Roadster sells for £186,500, accelerates from 0-60 in under four seconds and has a top speed of 208mph.

Lamborghini is 60 per cent owned by companies controlled by Hutomo Mandala Putra, better known as Tommy, the youngest son of former Indonesian President Suharto. MyCom Berhad, a Malaysian financial company, controls 40 per cent.

"From a purely economic point of view, it's questionable whether it makes sense," said Juergen Pieper, car analyst with Deutsche Morgan



Tommy Suharto: selling majority interest

Grenfell. "But it's a small price to pay to improve Audi's image and prestige."

Tommy Suharto's interest in the company began in December 1993, when other companies in his control acquired the US car maker Chrysler's majority stake in Lamborghini.

A group of banks and financial investors, including

General Electric Capital Corporation and Texas Pacific Group, and a buyout fund that controls the Ducati motorcycle group, were also interested in Lamborghini.

Audi said it saw the purchase as a "long-term investment" and would operate Lamborghini as a wholly-owned foreign subsidiary.

Profits warning hits car dealers

BY NIGEL COPE
Associate City Editor

SHARES IN car dealerships were badly affected by a severe profits warning yesterday from the Car Group, a "nearly new" car supermarket operator which warned of "recessionary conditions" in some areas of the country.

Car Group shares plunged 44 per cent to 85.5p after the company said it had been hit by depressed demand in the used car market and an "exceptional two-month price fall". Peter Floyd, the company's financial director said prices on some models had fallen by 10 per cent in the last two months.

Car Group said its results for the year to August would be significantly affected, prompting analysts to cut their profit forecasts from £7.6m to between £4.5m and £5m. The warning led to downgrades on rival car dealers such as Quicks. Analysts said that others such as Arriva, the former Cowie Group and Dixon Motors might also be vulnerable. Car Group's shares were priced at 138p when the company came to the stock market in November 1996.

The Car Group pioneered the concept of car supermarkets in the United Kingdom. All its sites, which trade under the National Car Supermarket name, are in the Midlands or the North and Mr Floyd said its base in Britain's manufacturing heartland was a factor in its problems. He said: "The strong pound has hit manufacturing industry and that is where we trade. The strong pound has also enabled manufacturers to offer good deals on new cars which may have affected demand on older models."

The company reduced stock levels but now feels prices might be settling and so has resumed normal purchasing patterns.

Car supermarkets are a growing phenomenon in the UK. A rival group CarLand launched to great fanfare in January. It is spending £25m developing indoor car supermarkets. Most of Car Group's are outdoor sites.

AROUND THE WORLD'S MARKETS

LONDON

WORRIES ABOUT Asia and the impact of the strong pound hit shares for the second day running. Footsie, up 48.1 points in early trading, ended 82.7 down at 5,769.8, its lowest for six weeks. At one time the index was off 102.2. Currency-sensitive stocks had another poor session with BAE off 21p to 489p. Hopes of yet further consolidation in the drugs industry lifted SmithKline Beecham 19p to 737p and Zeneca 33p to 2,602p. Government stocks gave ground. See Market Report, page 17

NEW YORK

GROWING FEARS of a recession in Japan hitting the US economy and slashing corporate profits triggered further heavy falls on Wall Street. Companies are getting their profit warnings out early, analysts said. At midday the Dow index was down 77 points at 8734. Profit-taking caused early falls in the US bond market but prices rallied as equities fell and yields on the 30-year bond edged below 5.45 per cent. US producer prices rose 0.2 per cent in May.

TOKYO

A NEAR eight-year low for the yen dominated Asian markets on Friday. Selling by short-term speculators and Japanese investors pushed the Japanese currency to 144.75 to the dollar, its weakest point since August 1990. The Nikkei index breached the key 15,000 barrier for the first time since January, but ended marginally up by 8.29 points at 15,022.33. The downside in Tokyo was limited by government-led pension fund buying around the key 15,000 support level.

GERMANY

GERMAN SHARES fell from their record highs as the threat from the deteriorating situation in Asia grew. The DAX index fell by 1.5 per cent, although it remains more than 30 per cent up on the year to date. Daimler-Benz shares fell almost 3 per cent at the start of the subscription period for the upcoming rights issue. VW bucked the trend rising 4 per cent but BMW fell 3 per cent. Inflation remains subdued with the CPI up 1.3 per cent in the year to May.

SOUTH KOREA

SOUTH KOREA's main stock index plunged 8.1 per cent to its lowest level in more than 11 years, on concern the yen's unrelenting slide will capsize exporters and extend the country's recession. The yen's frailty makes Japanese exports cheaper and puts pressure on Korea to let its own currency weaken to boost overseas sales. This would make it harder for Korea to let interest rates, condemning thousands of companies to bankruptcy.

Learning to sell the family silver

I WAS amused to see the headline in this newspaper and others concerning Labour's Damsus-like conversion to the cause of privatisation. Roughly paraphrased they read: "Brown to sell remaining family silver". This is a reference to Harold Macmillan's famous speech in the mid-1960s as the Earl of Stockton in which he criticised Margaret Thatcher's pioneering privatisation programme as tantamount to selling the family silver. The Tory grandee characterised the process as like some tragic tale of aristocratic decline. First the fine French period furniture disappears from the drawing room, then the Canaletto goes, and finally the family silver.

Lord Stockton's punishment for such a politically incorrect utterance was to have his portrait summarily removed from the walls of Number 10 Downing Street. I've no idea whether it has since been reinstated but given that Downing Street's new inhabitants seem as wedded to the idea of privatisation as Mrs Thatcher and Nigel Lawson even at their most gungpho, perhaps not.

The point about the latest clearout, however, is that such choice assets as the Newport Pagnell motorway service station, Belfast port, a further tranche of student loans, and the remaining government debt



JEREMY WARNER

Downing Street's new inhabitants seem as wedded to the idea of privatisation as Thatcher and Lawson

in British Energy, can hardly be described as family silver. That's all long since gone. To extend Lord Stockton's analogy even further: first the fine French furniture, then the Canaletto, then the family silver and now the battered old pewter mugs.

Somewhere along the line the great government clearout shifted out of the

sales room and into car boot sale territory.

To be fair, some of the assets on Mr Brown's hit list aren't too bad. The Royal Mint and the Tate should find plenty of takers, as too should the National Air Traffic Services, despite the fiasco of its inoperable new computer system. The last two of these would appear to be prime candidates for "securitisation", the process by which value is multiplied in the hands of the vendor by using a company's secure income stream to support the sale of high yield, junk bonds.

And if a Government which still quaintly prefers to call privatisation "private partnership" finds the idea of junk bonds beyond the pale, ministers shouldn't forget the recent National Audit Office report, which criticised the last government and its advisers for failing to spot that this way of privatising the train leasing companies would have yielded a great deal more for the Exchequer than the more traditional route used.

Even so, the Government has had to dredge the bottom of the barrel to find anything remotely saleable, as well as perform a nifty U-turn on its traditional opposition to privatisation of air traffic control. The Government is hoping to raise £4bn annually for the next three years from pri-

vatizations to help fund its spending plans - or £12bn in total. The assets earmarked should just about meet this target. However, once privatisation has been accepted as a legitimate way to fund spending, the public finances tend to come to rely on it. Mr Brown's £4bn a year is a level of proceeds not so far removed from what the previous government used to raise by this method. When the last of the pewter mugs is sold, what's he going to do for an encore?

Actually there are still some quite big businesses which, curiously, continue to languish in state ownership. These are the sacred cows which even the previous Government had difficulty in touching, notably the Post Office, Channel 4 and the BBC. The last of these will presumably for ever remain sacrosanct, certainly as long as Labour is in power. But a Government that can reverse its policy on air traffic control would presumably have little difficulty coming to terms with flogging off the other two. Fast forward to the other side of the next election, and whoever is then in power it seems likely these companies will be on the menu. Privatisation is just too tempting a way of squaring the circle between the demands of the spending departments and the demands of the markets for strict financial prudence in the

public finances for them long to be off it.

There was a lot of talk from the Chancellor about prudence in delivering his spending review this week. So much so that it made you suspect he protests too much. If the Chancellor goes on and on about how prudent he is, it must mean he thinks we'll think he's not being prudent, must it not? Quite a few people, particularly in the City, took precisely that view. And to some extent they were right to smell a rat. Alone in the press, the Financial Times drew attention to a clever little slight of hand which I have to confess I failed to notice when reading the documents.

The Chancellor would have us believe that growth in public spending is to be limited to 2.25 per cent a year in real terms for the next three years, which as he rightly pointed out, would be in line with Treasury forecasts for the growth in the economy. However, the Chancellor also promised to double the amount spent on capital projects, which is apparently a separate and distinct category of Government spending. If you thought that bit of extra spending formed a part of the 2.25 per cent headline increase, as I did, you would be wrong. In fact it is additional spending which takes the total annualised increase to 2.75 per cent, considerably more than

anyone expected and certainly well above Treasury forecasts for growth.

But we should perhaps not be too harsh on the Chancellor. His predecessors promised real cuts in public spending and comprehensively failed to achieve them. Mr Brown's is a kinder message; affordable increases. Provided the economy behaves as the Treasury forecasts, then it is indeed possible to have these increases and start paying down the national debt at the same time. But if the economy moves back into recession then all bets are off, as they always are in such circumstances.

Even so, to have expected the Chancellor to make the public finances recession proof too would have been prudent too far. And because to do so would have implied a freeze on spending increases, then the consequences might themselves have been recessionary. In any case, it seems to me the Chancellor has the balance about right. The public finances are in a far healthier state than anything demanded by the Maastricht treaty and it would be Scrooge like in the extreme to deny public spending a little of that cream, particularly if Mr Brown is as good as his word and the extra spending goes on priority projects in education, health and transport.

BA to create 3,500 jobs at Gatwick

BRITISH AIRWAYS is to create 3,500 jobs at Gatwick as part of a plan to expand its passenger and cargo operations from the airport over the next decade.

The number of BA passengers at Gatwick is scheduled to rise from 7.6 million to 12 million a year, while cargo volumes are expected to double to 400,000 tonnes a year.

BA said, however, that most of the increase would be catered for by using larger jets rather than through a massive fleet expansion. The airline said the number of aircraft in operation at Gatwick would grow by 10 to 20 in the next decade.

The expansion will see a number of new routes added to BA's network as well as increased frequency on existing services. There will be more flights to Latin American routes this summer and eight new routes to destinations in the eastern and central Europe, the Caribbean and the Middle East.

The extra jobs being created are part of BA's wider programme to increase its workforce by 7,500 to 70,000 over the next three years. Fifteen thousand extra staff are being taken on in areas such as customer service, cabin crew,

BY MICHAEL HARRISON

flight deck and telexes. At the same time, about 7,500 jobs are being cut in operations ranging from ground-handling and engineering to check-in facilities.

BA has increased its capacity at Gatwick by 20 per cent in each of the past three years. In the past decade it has increased its staff at Gatwick five-fold to 10,000, tripling passenger numbers - including those flown on franchise airlines - and invested £1bn in fleet modernisation. This year, older DC10s and Boeing 747-200 jets will be replaced with the latest Boeing 777s and 747-400s.

The expansion at Gatwick has been achieved by transferring a significant number of routes from the overcrowded Heathrow.

It comes as BA waits to hear whether its long-delayed alliance with American Airlines will finally be cleared to go ahead. The European Competition Commissioner, Karel Van Miert, is expected to announce formal conditions later this month for allowing the alliance to proceed.

BA has indicated that if it is

forced to surrender more than 300 slots at Heathrow to its rival carriers as the price for approval, then it will walk away from the deal.

In his initial findings, Mr Van Miert called for the surrender of 350 slots. The UK's Office of Fair Trading only recommended that BA and American give up 188 slots, phased over a two-year period.

If the American alliance does not go ahead, it will cast a shadow over BA's global strategy and possibly over the future of its chief executive Bob Ayling, who has championed the deal.

Most of the other big US carriers are already involved in alliances with other European airlines. Moreover, none of the alternative tie-ups BA might contemplate would produce the same economies of scale or transatlantic dominance as the American deal.

The European Commission has objected to the deal on the grounds that it would give BA monopoly over up to 70 per cent of traffic on the busiest transatlantic routes. But BA argues that the "open skies" deal that will accompany the go-ahead for the alliance will mean more competition and lower fares.



London Clubs, the casino operator, yesterday staked its hopes on increasing contributions from overseas as its chief executive Alan Goodenough (pictured) unveiled a 23 per cent fall in full-year profits. *Kalpesh Lathigra*

Nationwide issues BT predicts boom on the Continent

NATIONWIDE building society yesterday challenged other lenders to hold their mortgage rates in the wake of the surprise rise in base rates last week.

The world's biggest building society said it would also join Bradford & Bingley, another mutual lender, in pledging to hold its rates until 1 August.

The challenge was issued as Cheltenham & Gloucester, the mortgages arm of Lloyds TSB, boosted interest rates by 0.25 percentage points. C&G borrowers will now pay 8.95 per cent, a rise of £20.20 a month on a £100,000 loan. Alliance & Leicester also raised rates yesterday from 8.7 to 8.95 per cent.

Nationwide, which offers 8.1 per cent, said it would only

BY ANDREW VERITY

charge more if banks raised savings rates, forcing it to follow in order to protect its competitive position. Mortgage rates would then have to rise in line.

C&G increased savings rates on two accounts, its instant transfer account and its 10-day notice account, to 7.5 and 7.25 per cent respectively.

Brian Davis, chief executive of Nationwide, said: "It will be interesting to see if competitors can afford to follow our lead. Nationwide has not increased mortgage rates since September 1997, so we are providing borrowers with practically a full year of rate stability in spite of two base rate rises."

BY PETER THAL LARSEN

BRITISH TELECOM expects revenues from its continental European operations to grow tenfold to reach £4bn in the next nine years, the telecom giant said yesterday.

The revenues will come from BT's seven joint ventures on the Continent, which, the group expects, will make total revenues of £18bn in the same period. This would give the combined businesses a 10 per cent share of the European telecom market.

The figures were disclosed as BT yesterday lifted the veil on its European operations for the first time. Introducing the presentation, Alfred Mockett, the president of BT's global operations, said: "We've been

going quietly about our business. But now it's time to take the wraps off."

BT said that investment in its joint ventures in France, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland and Italy would reach a total of £3bn by the time it peaked. The businesses, which will lose £310m this year, are expected to reach break-even by 2002.

BT said it would also use the joint ventures as the basis for a pan-European communications network that would allow its global services business, Concert, to provide high-speed data transmission to large corporate customers.

IN BRIEF

Railtrack's ringfence

THE RAIL regulator John Swift told Railtrack that its agreement to build the Channel Tunnel Rail Link would be ringfenced from its core business and would have no bearing on the review he is conducting of its access charges for train operators.

His comments, in the form of a public letter to Railtrack, follow a warning that it would not build the second phase of the link if the charging review was too harsh.

Lloyd's warning

ROBERTS & Hiscox, a members agent at Lloyd's of London, has called for names to stop underwriting and quit the market by next year. The agent, a division of Hiscox plc with a £240m capacity, said its 270 names should leave because tough conditions in the market increased the risk of losses next year.

Hiscox also claimed the cost of the annual venture - the means by which names gain exposure to the market - was too high. In an angry response, the Association of Lloyd's Members said the call - the first in Lloyd's history - was "disgraceful".

New Look 165p

SHARES in New Look, the women's fashion retailer that is coming to the stock market, have been priced at 165p per share, valuing the business at £330m. The pricing is in the middle of the 155p-175p suggested price range and values the stake of Tom Singh, New Look's founder, at £112m. The institutional offer was two times subscribed and the intermediaries offer was "comfortably subscribed", the company said. Analysts said the modest pricing should ensure a buoyant stock market debut when dealings in the shares start next Friday.

Cortecs replies

CORTECS, the biotechnology company, yesterday sought to explain its handling of Glen Travers's departure as chief executive earlier this week. Without commenting on Mr Travers directly, Michael Flynn, the new acting chief executive, indicated that it was the "natural course of events" for entrepreneurial companies to outgrow their founders. Lord Patten of Wincanton, the former Conservative cabinet minister, has since been appointed Cortecs' non-executive chairman.

The company also announced yesterday that it has signed new marketing agreements with Becton Dickinson of the US that could earn it a minimum \$15m over five years.

GUS closures

GREAT Universal Stores, the home shopping group, is to close Argos's operations in the Netherlands just four months after they were opened. The move had been expected following GUS's victory in its £1.9bn takeover bid for the catalogue retailer in April. Argos has five stores in the Netherlands which will be closed on a phased basis. GUS wants to concentrate on developing Argos's home shopping operations.

COMPANY RESULTS

Name	Turnover (£)	Pre-tax (£)	EPS	Dividend	Pay day
Alstom	0.122m (5.545m)	0.040m (0.273m)	1.3p (7.3p)	0.8p (0.5p)	15.07.98
Alstom (L)	18.91m (15.202m)	0.052m (0.322m)	1.1p (6.17p)	0.75p (0.75p)	24.07.98
Alstom (L)	0.43m (0.43m)	-1.05m (-1.224m)	-1.3p (-4.5p)	-	-
Alstom (L)	167.2m (175.5m)	27.1m (25.2m)	13.0p (10.0p)	0.325p (0.25p)	31.07.98
London Clubs (F)	0.167m (0.401m)	-1.708m (-4.594m)	-6.94p (-20.04p)	-	-
London Clubs (F)	36.051m (32.052m)	5.255m (4.818m)	53.5p (48.7p)	43.0p (20.3p)	24.07.98

(F) - Fiat (L) - Lloyds TSB EPS is pre-exceptional *Dividend to be paid as a PD

Drug companies shake off Asian flu

DRUG SHARES displayed their own special resistance as the Footsie suffered another dose of the Asian blues.

Speculation that a further round of consolidation was about to hit the industry ensured the leading groups continued to attract attention.

SmithKline Beecham led the way. The shares gained a further 19p to 737p in busy trading as a variety of stories swirled around. At one time they were up 5p. This week SB has experienced heavy trading with the shares rising 68.5p.

The stock market seems intent on putting SB in the same ward with Glaxo Wellcome. Rumours that the two will get together continue to circulate. There is a suspicion Glaxo is prepared to mount a hostile strike if it cannot get even reluctant agreement from SB.

Earlier merger moves ended acrimoniously with the two sides indulging in increasingly bitter exchanges. The future management structure of the proposed £110bn group was the main

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

stumbling block and the latest rumours included the provision that Jan Leschly, SB's chief executive, would resign before the deal was completed.

But SB, which accused Glaxo of trying to force out Mr Leschly during the previous talks, denied he was stepping down. A spokeswoman said: "Jan Leschly is not planning to resign. He is at his desk today in Philadelphia. It is business as usual, and he will be at his desk in the UK on Monday".

She added: "We are a strong independent company and we

do not need a merger".

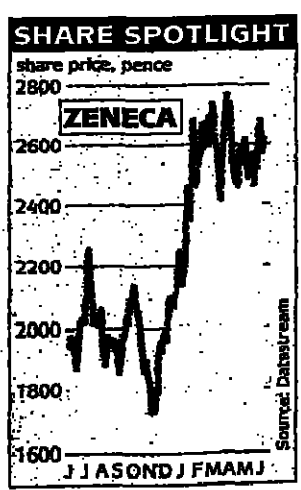
Glaxo ended 2p higher at 1,742p after an early 90p surge. Zeneca also bucked the sick market trend, gaining 32p to 2,502p. Nycomed Amersham, up 17.5p to 418.5p, and Medeva, 1p firmer at 178.5p, were other pharmaceutical groups on the up.

The Footsie, after slipping 102.2 points, ended nursing an 82.7 fall at 5,768.2, the lowest for six weeks. At one time it was up 48.1.

Supporting indices also felt the strain; the mid cap fell 55.8 to 5,881.2 and the small cap 11.4 to 2,756.

Besides the Asian worries the market was perplexed by the continuing strength of sterling and its obvious impact on overseas earners. Smiths Industries, British Aerospace and General Electric Co were in the front line. British Steel, expected to produce pound-ravaged results on Monday, fell 5p to 183p. Its year's profits are likely to be around £270m against £433m.

Financials were pulled even nearer to earth. Schroders lost



137p to 1,510p and Halifax 22p to 80p. Northern Rock was unsettled, down 25p to 560p, with ABN Amro and HSBC lowering their expectations.

Insurer GRE, hit by Cazenove on Thursday, retreated a further 14p to 360p as Pannure Gordon and SG Securities downgraded.

Associated British Foods lost an early gain, inspired by ABN Amro interest, to end

15p down at 580p.

Pilkington, the glass maker, cracked again, off 8.5p to 128.5p as Albert E Sharp expressed caution.

Cable & Wireless Communications fell 4p to 470.5p as the placing price was fixed at 460p. BCE, the Canadian group, sold its 14.25 per cent stake.

Next, the clothing retailer due to fall out of the Footsie, was little changed at 555p on reports, subsequently denied, that Simon Wolfson, son of the former chairman, is being groomed to succeed David Jones as chief executive.

Commodities group IED & F Man, on analytical support following results, gained 24p to 304.5p.

Newcomers ignored the gloom. Imaet, a computer group, ended at 413p from a 350p placing and Goldshield, a pharmaceutical group, closed at 206p against 180p.

Car Group produced the session's trading hit. The shares reversed 85.5p to 106p on a profit warning. Albert E Sharp quickly turned cautious

on Quicks, off 8p at 155.5p, and said Arriva, down 17.5p to 442p, and Dixon Motors, off 11p at 162.5p, looked vulnerable.

ISS, involved in cash-point security, fell 20p to 48.5p after confirming its year's loss would be around £740,000.

Haemocell was suspended at 3.5p. In what would appear to be a reverse takeover the blood transfusion group is getting together with unquoted Surgical Innovations, which develops surgical instruments.

Omnimedia, suspended at 2.25p, is also involved in a reverse deal. It is being used as a vehicle for SEC, an IT consultancy, to come to market.

Troubled engineer Powerscreen put on 30p to 100.5p and furnishings and wallpapers group Osborne & Little, on results and a special dividend, jumped 72.5p to 647.5p.

Drugs group Cortecs, which this week sacked founder Glen Travers, edged 7.5p higher to 113.5p. The company has won clearance from the US Food and Drug Administration for its ulcers and stomach cancer tests.

Capital Radio firmed 5p to 670p against a 744p 12 month high. Cazenove completed the placing of 10.24 per cent (7.6 million shares) of the capital, selling to institutions at 660p. The shares were unloaded by Radio Investments and Caledonia Investments.

Queensborough, the leisure group created by Kevin Leech, continues to attract unquoted Channel Hotels & Properties. It has acquired a further 4 million shares, 3.5 per cent, lifting its stake to 20.19 per cent. Mr Leech has a substantial shareholding. The shares rose 2p to 26.75p.

Tricorder has had a heady run on the fringe Oxfex market since declaring its intention of moving to AIM, climbing more than 60p to 112.5p. The company, which has developed 3D digital cameras, is being introduced to AIM by stockbroker Bell Lawrie White.

18/SHARES

[illegible]

SPORT

Battle for the box amid domestic disasters

LIKE A forward brought down in the act of shooting, my son beat his hands on the carpet in his frustration. On the television screen a character called, as far as I could tell, Mr Watermelon, was doing something that water-melons do. Which was fine, in itself. The only difficulty involved had to do with the time. 4.40pm - 10 minutes into the 1998 World Cup finals.

The next time the World Cup gets underway and my son wants to watch Mr Watermelon, or Walter Melon, or whatever he calls himself, I will make arrangements. On this occasion, sadly, no appropriate measures have been taken, no agenda agreed. Result: a difference of opinion.

The start of the World Cup finals still excites me in the childish way



MIKE ROWBOTTOM

many other sporting occasions now fail to do. That morning had been one like Christmas Days of old, when almost my first waking thought had been: "Today. Something special about today. Ah, yes."

So to find myself having to put the tournament's case to an enraged five-year-old came as something of a let-down. And the question could not be ignored. Why, when it came down to it, was the World Cup more important than Walter Melon?

Mentally, I rehearsed a number of arguments: "Because, son, this is the biggest sporting contest the world has ever seen... yes, bigger than a whale... yes, of course, you can have something bigger than a whale. A whale is a creature, but the World Cup... no, it isn't a fish. It's a mammal, isn't it? Remember? ...Right. So..."

Perhaps this, then: "Billions of people all over the world are watching... it's a million million... No, it's bigger than a million, because it's a million times a million. That means

a million lots of a million... anyway..." In the end, it came down to something simpler: "Because I want to watch it."

This argument failed to convince my son.

Fortunately, however, there was another line of approach - one involving the little portable television set living upstairs. That, however, involved a fresh round of negotiations with one of my daughters, who was using the screen for a computer game.

No more than a quarter of an hour later, after a wide-ranging discussion on the topics of children's rights, natural justice and why it was important to be nice to your little brother, the whole thing was set up. Children upstairs under an uneasy truce. Dad downstairs, with the second half

and perhaps even a soupçon of the first ahead of him.

It was a disappointment to learn that I had missed the first goal of the 1998 World Cup. The commentary made oblique reference to the "schoolboy error" which had led to Brazil's opener, and my mind ranged over all the classic Scottish gaffes down the years. Perhaps it had been a goalkeeping error from poor Jim Leighton - Wembley 1990 revisited? Or maybe a rocketing own goal off the fair head of a hapless Colin Hendry?

Settling myself down on the patch of carpet that had been so thoroughly pounded a little earlier, I began to get into the rhythm of the game. So this was it. For real. And Scotland were having a good go...

loud and prolonged. Some shrieks you hear and think "that sounds serious". Other shrieks you find you are moving towards before a thought goes through your head. This was in the latter category. I found my wife standing over what looked for a ghastly moment as if it might be a blood-bath - but turned out, on closer inspection, to be merely paint. Merely thick, crimson oil paint all over the new sink, maple edged units and grouted cream tiles as a result of some impromptu creative experimentation from our eldest daughter.

White spirit. White spirit. Or maybe that stuff for hands. No. White spirit. But where was it?

There was a roar from the television. I caught the name of Gallacher.

No kitchen roll. No kitchen roll. Toilet paper? Not strong enough. I raced next door to beg...

By the time I returned, the scene had been transformed from the Battle of Gettysburg to A Little Local Difficulty. The instant calculations of replacement costs - a grand, two - had been premature. It looked as though the kitchen was going to make it through to the second round.

So. One-all. As I suspected, Kevin Gallacher had earned a penalty and someone had equalised. Still. Most of the second half left...

Midway through the half the phone went, and I answered it. As I replaced the receiver I heard another television furor and returned to a screenful of cavoring men in yellow shirts...

Hiddink's orange men opt for peace

The 'Bergkamp generation' are the men who may today put the Dutch on course for glory. By John Lichfield in Versailles

THE FIRST question anyone wanted to ask the Dutch was: "Are you fighting among yourselves yet?" The second question was: "Will Dennis Bergkamp be fit to play against Belgium tonight?"

The answers were, respectively, "no" and "yes and no."

"Yes and no" on the Bergkamp question, because the Arsenal striker's hamstring is now "medically fit" but the rest of his body is not yet strong enough for a full game. He may come on during the second half of tonight's match at the Stade de France - the unofficial championship of the Benelux, and potentially the most attractive single game in the first phase of the World Cup.

On the other question - the in-fighting question - there is ominous news from the squad's luxurious quarters beside the Chateau de Versailles. Peace has broken out among the Dutch.

Appropriately, the Netherlands team held its first press conference in the gilded room at the Trianon Palace Hotel in which the final peace terms for the Treaty of Versailles were presented in May 1919, formally ending the Great War.

In almost every international competition since the Dutch became a football force in the 1970s, the skilful but quarrelsome men in the orange shirts have blown up their own chances of success. Not this time, said the team's coach, Guus Hiddink.

"In the past, Holland has had very, very talented generations - the

Cruyff generation, the Van Basten generation," said Hiddink. "They all failed to succeed in the final goal, for various reasons. That's why in 1998, I laid down a new framework of disciplines, responsibilities and values. The players are totally aware of those values. We are a good, tight squad of 22, prepared to go as far as we can go."

What Hiddink did not say was that the new "values" (starting with no open challenges to the authority of the manager) were laid down after a typically disappointing and fractious Dutch performance under his command at Euro 96. He also failed to account convincingly for the presence in France of not one but three "assistant coaches" - all experienced former Dutch internationals.

Some say that the trio - Johan Neeskens, Frank Rijkaard and

Ronald Koeman - are Hiddink's "enforcers". They are on the trip to stop the barracks-room lawyers in the squad from whispering that Hiddink, an undistinguished player who never won a cap, lacks the authority to be national coach. Others in the Dutch media suggest that the trio are there because the country's football authorities have the same doubt as some of the players.

No matter. The mood in the squad seems relaxed and determined. They came to the Belgium match, the key game in Group E, after a sparkling run in pre-World Cup friendlies: 2-0 against the USA; 3-2 against Mexico; 5-1 against Paraguay. The word from the eight



Dennis Bergkamp (second left) is flanked by Netherlands team-mates Patrick Kluivert (left) and Edgar Davids in a display of footballing harmony

players offered to the press yesterday followed a single script: "This time, we are all playing on the same side."

More specifically, Bergkamp said: "We succeeded at Arsenal last year because there was a very good attitude in the dressing-room, right through the season. It's the same in the Dutch team now."

Can the "Bergkamp generation" succeed where the previous generations failed? Much depends on the fitness of the great man himself. "I couldn't play a full game now," he said. "But I could come on, if I am needed, after half-time. If all goes well, I should be completely ready for the next game in a week's time

[against South Korea in Marseille on 20 June]."

The Dutch squad is packed with skilled and powerful defenders and midfielders - the De Boer brothers (Ronald and Frank), Jasp Stam, Wim Jonk, Clarence Seedorf, Aron Winter, Edgar Davids, Marc Overmars. Other than Bergkamp, it has only one central striker of undoubted international class, the young and enigmatic Patrick Kluivert, who had a poor season at Milan. To go all the way to the last four, or even the final (they are many people's dark horses) the Netherlands need a fit Bergkamp.

The manager hinted strongly yesterday that he would be used

against Belgium tonight only in dire emergency. "I must be 100 per cent certain that he does not risk another heavy injury," Hiddink said.

Judging by the size of the media clusters around individual players yesterday, the 1998 Dutch vintage may go down as not just the Bergkamp Generation but also the Stam Generation.

Jasp Stam, the world's most expensive defender, after his £10m transfer from PSV Eindhoven to Manchester United was agreed last month, seemed pleased with all the attention. After all, when he went to England for Euro 96 he did not get a game. Stam, 25, is a brutal-looking figure - tall, skin-headed and

roman-nosed - but a charming, soft-spoken man. No, it would make no difference to him that Alex Ferguson would be in the crowd tonight. He knows he will be under pressure anyway.

"Everyone will be pointing to me and saying 'that's the expensive one' and hoping I make a mistake. But pressure is good. I will soon settle down."

This has not been a happy World Cup for defenders. Does he blame the new rules outlawing tackles from behind?

"It's bound to be on your mind when you're off the field. You don't want to be the first one to do something stupid. But as soon as you go

on the field, you have to remember the rule but also forget it. If it is me thinking about what they are doing, then they can't afford that. You have to be free; you have to be yourself. You have to put it out of your mind, or you shouldn't be an international defender."

The Netherlands heavily defeated Belgium on two occasions in the qualifying competition. All Dutch squad members, from Hiddink down, are refusing to take that as a form guide for tonight's game.

The Belgian team has been rebuilt since then. Above all, Guus Hiddink said, they are "more of a team". So, it seems, are the Dutch.

Commentary of clichés, whinges and wines

OF ALL the novelty bets available to World Cup punters, not one embraced the possibility that ITV's Barry Venison would start a match analysis with the phrase, "This rain will really affect the grape harvest here in Bordeaux." What odds would you have expected on this, 500-1, 5000-1? What price could you have got for a "claret-mentioning" Yankee on Venison. Bob Wilson, Clive Tyldesley and Kevin Keegan are because they all did during Thursday's game between Italy and Chile.

Quite apart from marking another milestone on Venison's apparently ceaseless cultural ascent - he will probably finish the tournament by taking out French citizenship and applying for the Sorbonne - the sudden outbreak of wine-speak among the ITV team will have the accountants back at Network Centre check-

STAN HEY
VIEW FROM THE
ARMCHAIR



ing the expenses claims with renewed vigour.

But ITV's march into BBC territory is, as I predicted, underway as they begin to sift out the Sheringhams from their line-up in favour of the Owens, in search of the younger audience which their masters, the advertisers, covet so much. The dance-beat theme and strobing

lasers on the Eiffel Tower which form the opening credits to the World Cup broadcasts seem to be a direct appeal to the E-generation of viewers. When Bob Wilson appeared in Montpellier sporting a huge pair of earphones, I thought it was a joke at rival Gary Lineker's expense, but plainly it was an attempt to boost the market for Madonna headsets.

However, I suspect that Wilson is being eased towards the touchline in favour of the more relaxed and screen-friendly Jim Rosenthal, who has been seconded from ITV's Formula One coverage to be studio anchor in Paris. Wilson's usual wooden approach, which involves feeding the panellists a plinking line as a way to set up a video clip, has therefore been supplanted by Rosenthal's more confident, ad-libbing style.

But Bobby Robson has yet to adjust to this, judging by Thursday's late-night highlights programme in which the former England manager was so thrown by a Rosenthal question that he imagined he was first in Italy, and then in Spain before the host pointed out the electronically-projected skyline of Paris behind him. With Brian Moore already set to retire at the end of this

tournament, he may yet find other ITV stalwarts going with him.

Meanwhile, the BBC coped quite well with their first crisis, a dire first half between Austria and Cameroon which left new boy David Ginola dutifully struggling to say something good about it. "Don't worry," Des Lynham reassured him. "This is the BBC, you can say what you like."

Unfortunately, this is only too true as commentators John Motson and David Pleat were demonstrating. A two-man "Group of Death" in their own right, Motson's stat-attacks and Pleat's tactical outbursts, conspired to make a disappointing game worse. The BBC may come to regret their recent tribute to Motson (*The Pull Motty*) because the subject has failed to notice that it was an ironic piss-take rather than a ringing endorsement of his style.

Encouraged by this, Motson was in pure heaven with the exotic Cameroon team. Nobody doubts Motson's sincerity or his expertise, but he's beginning to assert a malign influence on fellow commentators who seem to view his style as the route to success. Thus, ITV's Tyldesley offers almost a replica of the voice and those buttock-clenched crescendos, while the BBC's John Champion, comes pre-prepared with Motsonian sound-bites.

The new boy, Peter Drury, hired by ITV from BBC Radio 5, nevertheless made an auspicious debut yesterday afternoon which marked him out as a commentator of great potential. Calm, authoritative and keen to make sure that the basic business of identifying who is on the ball was achieved, Drury coped well with the first goalless game of the

competition, Paraguay against Bulgaria, and the first red card was also the first person on either team to hint at the reasons for the open style of the group games.

My theory seems to be that the previous system of drawing three teams from each group of four to go forward encouraged a cynical realisation that beating up on the weakest team, and staging a couple of stale draws, was enough to qualify. But with only two teams advancing now, the need for two wins is imperative, hence the dog-eat-dog determination. Drury's appreciation of this underpinned his astute reading of the game. Less seriously, he was able to resist the temptation of a cheap George Michael joke at the Bulgarian Yankov's expense, thereby scuppering my 50-1 bet with Tote Credit.

William Hill have opened betting on Tuesday's St James's Palace Stakes at Royal Ascot and make Victory Note favourite at 9-4, followed by Lend A Hand (above) at 11-4, Desert Prince on 9-2, Fa-Eq on 5-1, Dr Fong on 8-1 and Almutawakel on 12-1

TV TIPS

4.45: Wuxi Venture was runner-up to Lonesome Dude last time, so his chance could be indicated by how well that colt runs the 3.10. He looks the main threat to **EVENING WORLD**.

Barrett	33-1	33-1	33-1	33-1	33-1
Each way, a quarter the odds, places 1, 2, 3, 4	33-1	40-1	40-1	33-1	33-1
C Coast H Wm H R L Laubach's 6 Stanley T Time					

VERDICT: Two-year-olds from the Paul Cole yard have a notably good record at this meeting and the half-bred FOCUS may not need to step up a great deal on his Goodwood debut effort to play a major role. Principally Dream looks the pick of his experienced rivals despite the flop of Tous Les Jours yesterday, and with Mark Johnson's team going well, Royal Mount could prove the best of the newcomers.

Frier Tropic Unlucky second to **Classy Cleo** over 5f at Chester but rather disappointing last time at Thirsk. Will need something better to make a mark here.

Nuclear Debate Comes here on a spring of good efforts. Badly drawn when time fifth at Newmarket last time and weighted with chance off same mark but poorly drawn.

Hugo Ayr nursery winner last season. Drops back in trip after moderate reappearance effort behind Jila at Newmarket (7).

Miss Sarah Consistent. Besty rhyme when second third to Magic Rainbow in her New-

FORM GUIDE

On The Ridge: Promising third to last; stablemate Eaton Square on Newbury debut but did not build on that at Newmarket. Good chance in weak race nevertheless.

The Gern Gentle: Has had plenty of chances but confirmed he has a race in him when second to Mischief at Haydock last week.

Truescott: Has not progressed with his racing and needs to do better than when a

Similar revealed	5-1	20-1	31-1	20-1	22-1
Rita	20-1	20-1	20-1	20-1	20-1
Allyson	25-1	25-1	25-1	25-1	25-1
Barbara	25-1	25-1	25-1	25-1	25-1
The Menace	25-1	25-1	25-1	25-1	25-1
Paul Hume	25-1	25-1	25-1	25-1	25-1
Pete Star	33-1	33-1	23-1	40-1	33-1
Hudson	25-1	25-1	25-1	25-1	25-1
Rhoda	25-1	25-1	25-1	25-1	25-1
Downbeat Fox	25-1	25-1	25-1	25-1	25-1

... ..

1. *Staphylococcus aureus* (100%)

'If in doubt, get the ball out. Lash it upfield'

FOR YEARS Italian teams have been experts at putting defenders in the right penalty area positions to deal with the danger when crosses are swung over. I was thinking the other afternoon that this side were no different when they failed to defend a centre and gave Chile their equaliser. Then, lo and behold, Italy put themselves in danger of losing the game when Marcelo Salas, who is not the tallest striker around, got above his marker to head a second.

Chile's second goal was a calamity for the Italians because the move sprung from a failure to clear the ball out of defence. That has always been their way; the back players will try and pass the ball at every opportunity whereas I would prefer to see them lash it upfield. I always used to tell my defenders: "If in doubt get it out".

It was a shock to see Italy concede



JACK CHARLTON

goals in that fashion and they were immensely fortunate to get back into the game through a diabolical penalty decision but write them off at your peril. They are notoriously bad starters, and don't forget that after Ireland defeated them in the opening group game in America four

years ago they went on to reach the final. Nor did Italy lose that game with Brazil. I don't consider it a defeat when you are beaten on penalties.

Watching both Brazil and Italy it was clear that neither have changed their approach from four years ago. Italy still play with a sweeper behind two markers; they give you room at the front but not at the back. They'll track back and place people behind the ball. They have done it no differently for the last 30 or 40 years.

The two front men for Chile, Salas and Ivan Zamorano, have come in for a lot of praise. Apart from the goals I never saw them in the game though their movement and running and the way the whole team got forward was exceptional at times. They came back well after losing an early goal but the Italians help you do that, they always seem

reluctant to look for the additional goals that will kill the game off.

The space Scotland discovered when they were able to get at Brazil, particularly in the second half, will have given hope to the other fancied sides in the tournament. The likes of Argentina, Germany and France will be thinking now that Brazil are maybe not the big threat they were anticipating.

It was such an unfortunate way for the Scots to lose that my heart went out to them and Craig Brown. You don't mind if Ronaldo has thumped one home from 20 yards or so but an own goal is a real sickener. Then again, had Brazil taken their chances as Brazilian teams normally do, the game would have been over before Tommy Boyd put through his own goal.

Ronaldo's finishing disappointed me. Several times he was in scoring

range and could only hit the goalkeeper or send the ball wide. What interested me about him was that he was making the same runs that we saw from Romario four years ago, coming deep to receive the ball and then either turning to run at the defenders or laying off the ball, often to the guy who made the initial pass and who then set off into the spaces Ronaldo had just vacated.

Scotland gave themselves problems by allowing Ronaldo to turn instead of getting right up close to him. I've always thought that he is not the greatest at turning, but once he comes at you face on and has the chance to use his pace then he is a frightening proposition, as we saw with that crazy run that took him past several challenges and on to a shot which Jim Leighton turned away.

Brazil look solid in defence, they

have big lads in there, good competitors, and they are pretty mobile. If I was their manager my worries would be over the goalkeeper. Taffarel. He never gave me feelings of confidence and he will need plenty of protection from those in front.

That's where the captain Dunga is so important because while others are bombing forward he sits in the middle, closes the spaces and forces the counter-attackers to play down the flanks rather than through the middle. When I was with Ireland I always told one of the centre-backs to step forward if we were short in central midfield because it is the one position you don't want to leave yourself exposed.

Brazil always seem to produce a glut of left-sided players whereas nations like ourselves struggle in that department. This time we've got Graeme Le Saux and nobody else.

Against Scotland Denilson showed some masterful touches down the left side when he came on.

Most of the games so far have been full of goals and have perhaps been more open, entertaining affairs than had been expected in the early stages. The referees must take credit because they haven't been inclined to wave yellow cards after every tackle – and also some of it will be down to the rules which make it hard to tackle.

Attackers know they can turn without getting kicked and if they are fouled near the box they will win either a penalty or a free-kick while the perpetrator runs the risk of a red card. The front men have so much more freedom these days. Imagine what it must have been like before to have a Norman Hunter or a Jack Charlton breathing down your neck as you went to receive the ball!

'By the time we play Tunisia, I will know the strengths and weaknesses of every player. We're very professional'

Inspirational Adams fit and ready for fray

TONIGHT, like every night, Tony Adams will pause for a moment and consider how his day went. Was it a good one? Was it a bad one? Did he achieve anything?

"It might have been a depressing, blue, horrible day, but, if it was, the important thing is that I acknowledge it," said Adams as he prepared for England's opening World Cup game against Tunisia on Monday. "I try to have good days. I want to do a good day in the office, that's where I get my self-worth from. But I'm a realist. You don't do everything good in a day, the thing is to acknowledge the mistakes and get on with the next day. I have fun today, I live my life, it's a great life."

It was not always like this. Adams is now almost two years into his well-documented fight against alcoholism and, so far, things are going well. But when he moves into the confessional mode, as he did when we spoke at England's Brittany training camp this week, it is evident that the fear remains, the fear of slipping back into the blackness.

Every so often this fear is given an edge by an unwanted reminder. Most recently it was the sight of Paul Gascoigne drinking his World Cup place away in La Manga. With the focus moving to the players who are in France, Adams was reluctant to discuss Gascoigne, but he repeated last week's pledge of a shoulder to lean on if Gascoigne wanted it.

"I'm there for Paul, he's a wonderful, happy, lovely, lovely soul. He's a beautiful man and there is a sadness in last week's events. But there are 22 professional players here trying to win the World Cup for England and talking about whether he should be playing is a derisive to the likes of David Beckham, Paul Scholes and so on. I wanted a fit, tal-

GLENN MOORE

ented Paul Gascoigne in the World Cup, but it was not to be and you have to accept the reality of it. He's gone."

Adams remains with England and his condition is an example to Gascoigne of what a change in lifestyle can achieve. Mentally and physically, he has rarely, if ever, been in better shape.

"I'm true to myself today," he said. "I've got rid of all the guilt. I can sit here and talk to you knowing you've got nothing on me. There are no ghosts in the cupboard. My physical condition is very good. The rest after the FA Cup final did me good. We

"Talking about whether Gazza should be playing is derisive to Beckham, Scholes and so on. I wanted a fit, talented Gazza to be here, but it wasn't to be"

worked very hard in La Manga then rested again. Now I'm strong."

His revival as a person has coincided with the emergence of the footballer Adams looked like he might become when he first broke into the England team. While he remains sceptical about his supposed transformation from braying centre-half into ball-playing libero, he accepts that, under Arsène Wenger, he is a far more rounded player than under George Graham.

"People say all I could do was head a ball; now I go forward and score beautiful goals. It's not as sim-

ple as that. If you go and look at the tapes you'll see I was a bit better than that, a player who could play a bit. I was playing a particular way because the boss wanted me to and it was successful. My game might have been suffering but I was winning so I thought 'why should I change?'

"I've changed now, but everyone does as they get older. I'm more experienced and the new manager has been wonderful for me. But I still play to my strengths. I still defend first and foremost. This player who brings the ball out, beats three or four people and sets up the centre-forward with a pass, he is a media figure."

This ball-playing sweeper exists even more vividly in Glenn Hoddle's imagination and it is no secret that Adams does not agree with the England coach's defensive vision. In the absence of an English Matthias Sammer, Adams remains England's defensive heart and he is already preparing for the Tunisian game.

"I'm very excited, the World Cup is the top of the tree, but I'm keeping it in perspective. I'm not focusing beyond the first game. By the time we play them I will know the strengths and weaknesses of every player in their team. I won't build them up, but I will know how they are on their right foot, their left foot, how good they are in the air. We watch videos, we're very professional, but it's nothing new, we used to do the same with foreign clubs at Arsenal."

"I started at 17, I saw that Pat Rice kept a notebook on left-wingers. I wanted to learn, I wanted to be a professional footballer, so I went home and put it all down. All about Cyril Regis, about Gerry Thompson, the way he out-jumped me. It's knowledge, it's my job. I still do it."



The England centre-back Tony Adams stretches during a light training session yesterday

David Ashdown

Watching Colin Hendry up against Ronaldo did he think, 'I'm glad it's not me out there?'

"If I thought that I wouldn't be here. You relish the challenge. But it's not just about Ronaldo. They are an excellent team."

And England strikers? "Potentially they are as good as anyone in the competition."

Adams appeared to be equally unphased about the new interpretation on tackling. "I won't be changing my game. Good players can adapt, you

stay on your feet. It was the same situation at the Arsenal a couple of years ago when they banned the tackle from behind and back-passes to the goalkeeper. They said it was all over for us but we went on and won another championship."

After this year's successes, the latest brace of trophies are still settling into their new Highbury accommodation but, said Adams, that is past history. "It's gone, it's finished. The important thing for Tony Adams is to look forward."

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Museum of bare-faced cheek

I WAS looking for the Museum of Erotic Art. "I'm looking for the Museum of Erotic Art," I said to the woman in the red blouse.

"You've found it," she said.

"It's here."

I had just walked out of the Café Casablanca on the Boulevard Clichy in the Pigalle district of Paris when this woman took my arm and asked me where I was going. She seemed very keen to be helpful. The recent advertising campaign by the Mayor, exhorting Parisians to be friendly to visitors, was clearly having an impact.

"Are you sure this is the museum?" I said.

I eyed the sign over the door dubiously. It read: "Le Nooky". "I want the Musée de l'Érotisme. Apparently there is a special football exhibition."

"Yes, yes," she reassured me, pulling me through the door. "You're in the right place, the football show is about to come on."

I was carried inside on a solid wave of advancing Scotsmen, wearing kilts and hats with feathers in and singing a Rod Stewart song.

"My name is Sylvie," she said. "What's yours?"

"It's rather dark for a mu-

**ANDY MARTIN
AT LARGE IN
FRANCE**



seum, isn't it?" I said. Aside from a dimly lit stage, I couldn't see a thing.

"The museum is at the back," she said. "Here, sit down. I'll get you a drink."

She brought the drink and asked for 30 francs. I gave her a 50 note and she gave me 10 francs change. "I don't see any football exhibition here."

The Scotsmen let out a cheer. A young woman in football shorts and jersey was coming on stage, accompanied by throbbing music. She was carrying a football under one arm.

"I'm here to do some research."

"Would you like to buy me a drink?"

"I've really got to find this museum," I said. "I'd really better go."

"Don't worry, I will show you the museum. It's through there." She pointed vaguely.

The woman on stage had now removed her jersey and was dancing with the ball in a way I'm sure the FA rule book declares illegal. The men in kilts were humming a tune that I associate with porridge oats and caber-tossing.

"Have a good heart and buy me a drink," Sylvie put her hand on my knee. Perhaps she had taken the Mayor's message a little too literally.

Up on the stage, the dancer was rolling about on top of the ball. All she was wearing was a referee's whistle.

Sylvie asked: "What do you think of the cabaret?"

Well, it definitely wasn't football, but I had by now come to

a pretty firm conclusion that it was not erotic, either. As Roland Barthes wrote in *Mythologies*: "Striptease desexualizes the woman at the very moment that it undresses her."

"I've got to go," I said.

A man in a suit arrived, bearing a drink on a tray. Even in the darkness he had a swarthy look about him. I had a hunch that he was not so wholeheartedly committed to the Mayor's latest thinking as Sylvie. "Goodbye," I said.

"The bill, monsieur."

"What bill?"

"For the drink."

"I've paid for my drink."

"Sylvie's drink."

"I didn't buy her a drink."

He whispered with Sylvie. "She says you did."

"OK, OK, how much is it?"

The man switched on a torch and pointed at the bill. "Fruit juice, 700 francs (700)." "Is that a joke?"

"No, it is not a joke, it is the minimum."

I had a good laugh at it anyway. "I was looking for the Museum of Erotic Art."

I went to go. The man in the suit started pushing me. It is in this kind of situation where my French generally lets me down. It let me down then. So, for want

of any better ideas, I started pushing him back.

"Take your hands off me," he said, in a tone of immense indignation. "You come in here, order a drink, and then refuse to pay. I am calling an agent de police."

"Fine," I said. "Let's call an agent de police."

As it turned out, nobody called an agent de police. For it was at this precise moment that the small battalion of the Tartan Army that had piled into the Nooky chose to pile out again. I was swept up and expelled into the light once more.

"Thanks," I said to no-one in particular.

Sylvie was outside. She thought I was speaking to her. "Come later," she said. "I'll show you the museum."

As I continued up the Boulevard de Clichy, still looking for the Musée de l'Érotisme, the Scots were comparing notes.

"She was something, didn't ya think?"

"Aye, she was – but, ya know, this place is terrible. It's nothing but peep-shows."

I had been thinking about asking them if they wanted to come along to the football exhibition at the Museum of Erotic Art. But I decided to let it go.

كانا من الاصل

Batistuta on route towards golden future

IN ONE respect at least you can see why Alex Ferguson sees Gabriel Batistuta as a replacement for Eric Cantona. Ask the Argentine a potentially tricky question and his understanding disappears. "I'm sorry," he says, shrugging his shoulders in a manner familiar to Manchester United of seasons past, "my English is not very good."

For two years now, rumours have circulated that Batistuta, 29, is Old Trafford bound, a testament to his fluency on the pitch. Make that the football equivalent of multi-lingual, because the man evades markers with the same facility he dodges questions.

Cantona was a playmaker-cum-striker, Batistuta does not worry about creation. Destruction is his thing, scoring goals at the rate of more than 20 a season in Italy's Serie A for Fiorentina. Add more than 40 for his country, Argentina, and you can see why claims about Alan Shearer's place at the apex of the world's strikers are greeted with some scepticism, even in parts of South America that do not pay homage to Ronaldo.

Against the Republic of Ireland in April, it was clear that Batistuta had the word "friendly" foremost in his mind. He barely bothered to run, yet he scored a goal with a delicate touch at the near-post, hit the woodwork and was thwarted on another run only by Shay Given's brave save. A hat-trick would not have been out of the question by any means, something he achieved last month against Bosnia. Imagine what he might have done if he had been really trying.

If Batistuta plays, he normally scores, which puts Argentina in a privileged position compared to other leading sides - France spring immediately to mind - who have a wonderfully creative core but are not blessed with seasoned and natural strikers. The rider being, if Batistuta actually plays.

For nearly a year, Daniel Passarella, the national coach, dispensed with Batistuta's services, saying: "If he wants to play in the World Cup, he must learn the way

Recalled to the national side, Argentina's main striker is ready to use the platform to show his wares. By Guy Hodgson

my Argentina plays." That involves one centre-forward with several others joining in support, seemingly a perfect role for Batistuta but one that only recently seems to have landed in his lap ahead of Parma's Hernan Crespo.

For months a great deal of pointing and posturing went on but, going into France 98, bridges have been rebuilt and coach and player are reading from the same script. A problem? "Absolutely not," Batistuta replied. "I'm not against the press, but those stories are not real. I can't say why I wasn't in the team for nine months. Perhaps the manager thought another striker was playing better than me."

'I would like to move to England. There are various teams that interest me. In two or three years it is possible'

Passarella added: "Other players didn't play too, but because Batistuta is well known it was noticed. When he didn't play it was for tactical reasons, nothing more. There were rumours of a rift between us but that never existed. My relationship with him is exactly the same as with the other players."

Hmmm. Spend time with Batistuta and you hear what he hopes will be best received. To Argentina he says he wants to return to his South American cattle ranch when his contract with Fiorentina ends in June 2000; in Italy he wants to stay there. The British version? What you would expect, really.

"I would like to go to England but I don't know," he said. "There are

various teams that interest me, but the most important thing for me would be that they would allow me to fight for the championship. Manchester United, Liverpool or Arsenal, no problem, they are all very good. In two or three years, it is a possibility."

"Manchester United contacted me last year and it wasn't a question of money why I stayed. Fiorentina pay me well. It's simply that Fiorentina could not sell me. The reaction of the fans would have been too angry."

Bull is not exclusive to Batistuta's farming interests but within those sentences are many grains of truth. When Roberto Baggio was sold for £8m in the 1980s there were riots in Florence - something that would almost certainly be repeated if "Batigol" was transferred - and, at a reported £2m a year, he is second in Italy only to Ronaldo (£3m) in terms of wages.

Yet Batistuta has been frustrated by Fiorentina's repeated failure to win anything of substance and the lack of a suitable stage in Europe has irked him in the past. "I was happy for Ronaldo," he said after the Brazilian became World Player of the Year, "but I still don't know what the criteria is to win the award."

The World Cup provides him with a platform to set his own parameters and, despite repeated denials from Fiorentina that they would let him go, there is a suspicion that Batistuta will be performing not only for Argentina in France but also for his own future.

The stories linking him to Manchester United will only fade away if he goes elsewhere, probably to either of the Milan clubs. But if he does want to come to this country then the opportunity to show his wares could be upon him soon. If England qualify for the second phase, Argentina could be their opponents.



Gabriel Batistuta: Fiorentina couldn't sell me. The fans would have been too angry. Empics

Guivarc'h the latest French export

BY ANDREW MARTIN

FRANCE CONTINUED to yield up its talent to the world yesterday as Newcastle and Blackburn moved to secure the services of two of the World Cup host nation's footballing luminaries. Arsenal, too, are lining up a raid across the Channel.

The first player to travel to England this summer is expected to be Stéphane Guivarc'h. The 27-year-old Auxerre and France striker has agreed to join Newcastle for £3.5m.

He could be swiftly followed by countryman Sébastien Péro, the subject of a £2.5m offer from Blackburn Rovers. The Bastia defender has been over to Lancashire to visit Ewood Park and is understood to be keen to sign. Blackburn have already spent £7.25m for the Southampton striker Kevin Davies and signed the Newcastle defender Darren Peacock on a free transfer, plus £500,000 on Gillingham's Jim Corbett.

Arsenal will pursue their interest in Thierry Henry, Monaco's French international right-winger, once the host nation's participation in France 98 is over. But there is likely to be a snag to the deal which could involve the Double winners losing Nicolas Anelka to Barcelona.

When the Spanish champions bought the Brazilian striker Sonny Anderson from Monaco for £4m last year, they also took out an option to purchase Henry, a 20-year-old Parisian who broke into France's World Cup plans this year.

According to L'Equipe, Barcelona have informed Monaco that they will allow Henry to join Arsène Wenger's French colony at Highbury. However, the newspaper claims that they will waive their claim on the player only if Arsenal let them have Anelka, who did not make the national squad.

Southampton dipped into the fee they received for Davies yesterday to take Stuart Ripley from Blackburn for £1.5m. The 30-year-old had been linked with a return to his former club, Middlesbrough, but the Saints manager, Dave Jones, has emerged as the favourite to sign the winger, according to ClubCall.

The summer managerial carousel turned yesterday, with Bruce Rioch expected to step back on at Norwich. The former Bolton and Arsenal manager is poised to take over from Mike Walker, who parted company with the Carrow Road club at the end of April.

Collins cagey as move to Premiership beckons

BY BRYN PALMER

THE SCOTLAND midfielder John Collins yesterday insisted he will wait until after the World Cup before deciding which English Premiership club to join.

The 30-year-old midfielder has been linked with moves to both Middlesbrough and Liverpool after admitting he will leave Monaco after the finals.

Collins was impressive against Brazil in the tournament opener on Wednesday, when his penalty ultimately failed to prevent the Scots falling to a 2-1 defeat.

And as he prepares to face Norway on Tuesday in a match crucial to Scotland's hopes of qualifying for the second round, the former Celtic player will not be rushed into deciding where to continue his career.

He said: "I have got a year to go on my contract with Monaco but I feel now is a good time to come back and

play in England. There is nothing definite but I have got good options and I will make my decision after the World Cup. There is too much to concentrate on at the moment."

Collins believes it is now vital to beat Norway in Bordeaux on Tuesday if Craig Brown's side are to fulfil their dream of becoming the first Scottish side to make it past the group stages.

"Not getting anything out of the first game means it is now vital to get three points against Norway," he said. "There is a lot of confidence in the group that we can qualify, although we have got two tough games ahead of us with Morocco to come as well."

The need for Norway to gain a victory is equally pressing if Egil Olsen's side are also to progress beyond the first round for the first time. They will meet Brazil in their final first-round match, so earning maximum points against the Scots

may prove decisive. "Brazil will qualify from the group, and then it will be one from Norway, Scotland and Morocco," Olsen said.

"I'm sure it will be a very difficult game for us against the Scots. I heard they played very well against Brazil, so I know it won't be easy for us. It will be a tight game and potentially a decisive game. The winner can go through, but the loser will be eliminated."

Olsen is considering up to three changes - probably all in defence - to the team who drew with Morocco in Montpellier. "We couldn't cope with the fast attacks and the long balls from Morocco," he said. "We need to work on our organisation in defence and I may make one, two or three changes. I don't know at this stage."

Norway have only one injury problem, the defender Vegard Heggem, who pulled groin muscles during yesterday's

training session and is expected to be out of action for at least 48 hours.

Jamaica's Fitzroy Simpson is convinced the Reggae Boyz will show the world how good they are when they open their Group H campaign against Croatia in Lens tomorrow - that the West Indians are not merely present in France to make up the numbers.

The Portsmouth midfielder claims Jamaica are in a defiant mood and could well surprise any side that does not afford them the respect they deserve.

"We are here to try and make progress in the tournament," he said. "Of course, we are under no illusions. It will be a big test for us but if our opposition treat us too lightly then they will be in for a big surprise."

"There are some talented players in our squad and we are all confident about our ability as a team. We are optimistic about making progress."

THE GLOBAL GAME

THE WORLD CUP AROUND THE WORLD

"IT MAKES you smile to think back months ago, when everyone was sounding off on what the Azzurri team would be for the World Cup. When you think that we still don't know now, after the first match [Thursday's 2-2 draw with Chile], in which Maldini tried out, and not for fun, 14 players, and called for help from the unthought-of Chiesa, a player who should by now have been off at the seaside. When things go badly you still have to improvise, but we still have the cardinal question hanging in the air. What is, what will be, the national team which will take us through the tournament? What shall we do, start again from the top?" "Gazzetta dello Sport", Milan

"THERE WERE almost no chances in the first half [of Austria's 1-1 draw against Cameroon on Thursday]. Later the game did get better and more varied. But it undoubtedly remained the weakest of the four World Cup matches so far. Well, who on the TV captions had the promising name 'Well' [World], did most of the attacking work, while Herzog looked as though he had taken his leaden waistcoat off at last. A triple change [three substitutions] was supposed to turn things around. A seemingly ludicrous enterprise for the eight remaining minutes. But, thanks to Polminster, the equaliser arrived just when time was running out." "Kurier", Vienna

SPANISH FANS are grimly anticipating weeks of boring, cautious football until the finals. "No player wants to over-exert themselves with so many games to go," said the El Pais football commentator yesterday. The Spanish coach, Javier Clemente, instructed his boys not to talk to the press ahead of their debut against Nigeria today, condemning as "spies" some journalists who tried to breach the kilometre-wide no-go zone surrounding Tuesday's training session. Doctored Spanish hacks accepted the conditions, to the disgust of their Italian counterparts who criticised them for being feeble.

Compiled by Rupert Metcalf and Elizabeth Nash

IN FRANCE WITHOUT A TICKET

Nicholas Horning's daily quest to get into a World Cup match: Day Three

After the hair-raising 152-mile dash from Bordeaux the night before to take in the last hour of Austria v Cameroon in Toulouse, the journey to Montpellier was fractionally more sedate. There we found, as expected, that Bulgaria v Paraguay was the easiest and least expensive game so far to penetrate. The touts' prices dropped drastically as kick-off approached, and a friend purchased a 250 franc ticket for just 200fr, then I acquired a 145fr ticket for 150fr. No problem...



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Salas exposes the game's defensive frailties

A PHOTOGRAPH on the front page of yesterday's *International Herald Tribune* and several other publications showed Marcelo Salas climbing above Fabio Cannavaro to head Chile into the lead against Italy in Bordeaux.

At the time of its execution, 10 minutes into the second half, Salas's second goal prompted not only thoughts about the impact he looks likely to make in Europe following a move from River Plate to Lazio (worth £12m to him personally) but how far defensive standards appear to have fallen.

None of the coaches whose teams have already turned out in these finals will be happy with the work done in their own trenches. Certainly not the Italian coach, Cesare Maldini. A doleful figure at the best of times, he grew increasingly agitated at the Parc Lescure on Thursday with basic errors of application and judgement.

No matter how much the game of football evolves strategically, the fundamentals will always remain the same. Teams who can't cope with

simple aerial attacks aren't going anywhere.

This may be Italy's fate at France 98 unless Maldini can coax a more purposeful response from the guardians of Italy's goal area. To see them caught out of position and continually second best when attempting to out-jump Salas and Ivan Zamorano must have made Maldini feel older than his 66 years.

After the struggle to qualify that put his position in jeopardy, Maldini reverted to the old defensive *catenaccio* he helped to perfect as a leading player. This despite the knowledge that the best available choice as sweeper, Alessandro Costacurta of Milan, is not always alert to the responsibility.

However, it was not so much Costacurta's fallible reactions leading perhaps to a redeployment of

Maldini's son, Paolo, who was again outstanding at left-back that will have worried Maldini as much as the woeful marking. Even allowing for Salas's courage and a spring reminiscent of Denis Law, defenders with a big advantage in height should at least have been on equal terms with him.

There was an early warning for Italy, and a thought provoking moment for Maldini, when Salas got behind Cannavaro and Alessandro Nesta to head just over. A problem or just a lapse in concentration? A problem it was, one that would cause an outbreak of paranoia in Italy's defence.

With the first half running into three minutes of injury time, Cesare Maldini had to think again about the advice he was about to impart in Italy's dressing-room when Zamora-

no again got the better of Nesta, heading down for Salas to bring Chile level.

Maldini could be imagined stressing the importance of attacking the ball from Chile's centres and maintaining defensive cover. Coaches can never be certain that their words have actually sunk in and, within five minutes of the re-start, Maldini must have been wondering about the ability of his central defenders to absorb simple tactical information.

Joining in an attack that developed in midfield, Pedro Reyes came forward to fire in a centre that Salas converted with his head after again getting in position to rise above the head-footed Cannavaro. On the touchline, Maldini held his head in despair and began to prime his substitutes.

So uncharacteristic of Italian football, the malaise is widespread, a manifestation perhaps of the nervousness caused in defenders by Fifi's ill-judged decision to load the dice in favour of attackers. Then again, it could be a view supported by a number of coaches I have recently conversed with that the fashion for more fluid systems of play is having a detrimental effect on the development of young defenders.

When the Leeds United manager, George Graham, referred last season to a general decline in defensive play, he wasn't thinking only about the Premiership. "I see it wherever I travel in the game," he said. "Unless there is a strong midfield screen in front of the defenders very few of them today look really comfortable. They have grown so used to being protected that a

crisis comes as a complete shock to them."

Earlier this week, Scotland opted for putting plenty of bodies between the ball and their goal, an understandable policy in view of Brazil's clear technical superiority. A problem with this is that attackers are prone to aberration when given defensive responsibility. The own goal that brought Brazil victory resulted from Gordon Durie's positional error when drawn back to provide his defence with much needed assistance. Lured to Denilson's cross from the left, he lost sight of the danger developing behind him.

These are early days but nobody should get carried away by the notion that risk-taking will become a feature of these finals. The game is played at both ends and there isn't a coach here who doesn't know it.



KEN JONES

Nankov is tournament's first sending-off as Bulgaria fail to revive the spirit of '94

Chilavert forages in vain

By Peter Lansley
at Stade de la Mosson,
Montpellier

Bulgaria 0
Paraguay 0
Att: 27,650



THE BACKBONE of the Bulgarian team who claimed God must be a compatriot after beating Germany to reach the semi-finals of USA 94 were present in body, if not in spirit, yesterday as Fifi's new cleansing edict claimed its first victim.

In the first goalless draw of these World Cup finals, Anatoli Nankov became the earliest recipient of a red card for a tackle from behind in this competition, a decision which drew a stinging rebuke from the Bulgarian coach, Hristo Bonev.

Nankov, one of the few privileged younger players to be allowed into the side among Stoichkov, Ivanov and company, had already been cautioned for a 27th-minute foul on Jorge Campos when, with two minutes remaining, he slid in from behind to fell Juan Carlos Viegas.

The Saudi Arabian official, Abdul Al Zeid, had as little hesitation in plucking out his red card as Bonev did in saying afterwards: "Fifi will regret what they are doing with the new rule. It is going to make football soft."

"People come to the World Cup to watch a man's game, but what Fifi are doing will change all that. The people will not be happy. I thought the decision on my player was harsh. He is the first victim of the new rule."

The distraction of the dismissal could not mask the reality, however, that Bulgaria had let slip a total dominance of this game and they ended somewhat gratefully with a single point.

The sight of Paraguay's eccentric goalkeeping captain, Jose Luis Chilavert, rushing the full length of the field to take a 73rd-minute free-kick had seemed destined to complete Bulgaria's fall from grace.

Chilavert, a beloved, if controversial, iconoclastic figure in South American football, is not to be taken lightly when he forages forward to within sight of his opposite number's goal. The four goals he has scored for his country include one in the draw in Argentina that helped ensure qualification for France 98.

These past few days he has been witnessed staying behind after training practising his dead-ball kicks. And from 25 yards yesterday, with all the finesse of David Beckham, his strike curled menacingly towards the top corner, requiring Zdravko Zdravkov to make the save of the game.

Yet Bulgaria started with the belief and swagger that suggested the advancing years would not hold them back from picking up where they left off in America; Euro 96 might, after all, have been just a blip.

Stoichkov, all struts and snarls, suddenly came alive when Roberto Acuna gifted him a sight of goal, but the former Barcelona striker's left-footed shot hit the post.

Stoichkov has relinquished the captain's armband to Trifon Ivanov



Lyuboslav Penev of Bulgaria (right) and Paraguay's Carlos Morales battle for the ball during yesterday's 0-0 draw

Reuters

who, despite wearing his hair short these days, retains that loveable "wolfman" image. When he started pacing slowly back in preparation for a 40 yard free-kick strike shortly before half-time, Krassimir Balakov ripped in to play the ball short. Ivanov was furious. It is to be hoped Balakov, the stylish but temperamental Stuttgart midfielder, has his health insurance sorted.

From the moment Jose Cardozo insipidly shot wide when running through in injury time in the first half, however, Paraguay - who, after all, only qualified one point behind Argentina - cast aside their inferiority complex in their first World Cup finals match since Gary Lineker's goals eclipsed them in Mexico 12 years ago.

In a group where Spain would ap-

pear to stand head and shoulders above the other teams, a winning start was crucial. If Miguel Benitez had shown more composure in front of goal in the second half, Paraguay would have achieved such a feat. Chilavert, typically dominant at the post-match press conference, said: "We played well and we should have won. But we weren't talented enough to take our chances."

PARAGUAY (3-4-3): Calleri (Velez Sarsfield); Sarabia (River Plate), Apala (River Plate), Guevara (Corinthians); Acuna (Real Zaragoza), Bordon (Internacional), Porto Alegre; Parales (Olimpia), Morales (Granada), Carlos (Nacional), Benitez (Barracas), Campos (Guanajuato), Subiat (Real Madrid), Cardozo (Velez), for Morales. 47: Benitez (Sporting Lisbon) for Cardozo, 70: Viegas (Cruz Azul) for Campos, 78.

BULGARIA (4-2-2-2): Zdravkov (Istanbulspor); Nankov (Lokomotiv Sofia), Vardoulakis (Sporting Lisbon), Ivanov (CSKA Sofia), 11: Petrov (Dinamo Zagreb); Stoichkov (Barcelona), Trifon (Hamburg); Ivanov (CSKA Sofia), 12: Ivanov (CSKA Sofia) for Petrov, 66: Borkharov (1860 Munich) for Ivanov, 78.

Referee: Abdul Al-Zeid (Saudi Arabia).



DIARY

THE 'ALLER and Retour' Galliard Official Guide to France 98 has struggled for accuracy in its section devoted to Scotland. As if naming the injured Gary McAllister as the Scots' star man were not bad enough, the guide also lists Scotland's 'trainer' as Jock Brown, the Celtic general manager and brother of national coach Craig Jock. Ironically, it is currently considering legal action over claims that he interferes in team affairs at Parkhead.

JAPAN, A nation often said to be obsessed with sex, has decided it has no place in the World Cup, imposing a ban on their players for the entire tournament... A leading Japanese magazine said the younger members of the party were passing around pornographic magazines to minimise the effects of the deprivation while the coach Takeshi Okada has set up a "relaxation room" equipped with video and computer games at the team's hotel.

THE BRITISH-themed sports bars in Paris and Toulouse, the Frog & Rosbit, is struggling to cope with demand from England supporters for their beer - Inseine, Paralytic and Dark de Triomphe are three varieties - and with a pint downed on average every 15 seconds they can't brew enough. Meanwhile, the spectre of empty restaurants as diners stay at home to watch the football has persuaded six top French chefs to offer free meals in Rouen.

WORLD CUP football is far less damaging to your health than attending a rugby match or a rock concert, says the French organising committee's head doctor, Nicolas Garodetzky. "We've had only a few matches but so

far everything has gone smoothly with relatively few fights and surprisingly few cases of alcoholism," he said. "Compared to open air rock concerts, we've had very few problems." Even with the thousands of Scottish fans pouring into the Stade de France for the opening game with Brazil, very few people were drunk. "Only one serious case has been reported - it's much worse for big rugby matches," Garodetzky added.

THE NIGERIAN team have been ordered by their country's new leader, Abdulsalam Abubakar, to shine in France so their compatriots don't become even more depressed about the death of his predecessor, General Sani Abacha. "The hopes of a nation rest on your shoulders in this difficult time," he told them.

AUTOGRAPH HUNTERS successful in obtaining Jamaican signatures are receiving religious messages as well. "God is with you" and "Jesus loves you" are some of the Christian wishes being written by the squad. Coach Rene Simoes said: "It's important the message our team gives to the world - believe in your dreams and God will be with you."

SAUSAGE SALES in Denmark increased by 25-30 per cent and the demand for crisps, soft drinks and beer matched it as the nation prepared to watch their opening game with Saudi Arabia. In Bulgaria the priority heading the shopping lists is a television set. "In the last two to three weeks people are buying TV sets like bread during a crisis," said a salesman.

TREVOR HAYLETT

QUOTES OF THE DAY

"I've got a Welsh dragon tattooed on my arm and it's been pretty difficult hiding it from the other South African boys." Paul Evans, goalkeeper added to the South African squad. He was born in South Africa but raised in Wales.

"It was wonderful. But I'm planning to score an even better one before the tournament ends." Cameroon's Pierre Njanka, after his extraordinary goal in the 1-1 draw against Austria.

"I think 3-1, 2-1 and 2-0. That is nine points." German chancellor Helmut Kohl, who visited his country's squad yesterday, on their prospects in the first round.

"The play wasn't encouraging. Let's hope for better." Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi after draw against Chile.

Clemente confident of strength in depth

By RUPERT METCALF

SPAIN'S COACH, Javier Clemente, and his team head into their opening World Cup game against Nigeria in Nantes today on the back of an astonishing record which has left them supremely confident.

But the Spaniards are perennial under-achievers, with a fourth-place finish in 1950 still their best performance in nine previous finals appearances, while they were quarter-finalists in 1986 and 1994.

There is a feeling in the Spanish camp, though, that this may be their year, despite the fact they have been drawn in a tough group

with the 1994 semi-finalists, Bulgaria, and Paraguay.

Clemente's record with the Spaniards is remarkable. Since he took over in 1992, his team have lost only three times in 54 matches and qualified for France 98 unbeaten.

Clemente has worked hard to establish a sense of unity in a squad that contains many individual stars. "I've always wanted to put a real team together and I think I've got that right now," he said. "I have the feeling that we have strength in numbers."

"Individuals are important in certain situations, but what is important is that every player knows what is

necessary for the good of the team. The current side have a winning mentality. They are born winners."

In Lyons this afternoon South Korea have their best chance to shed the World Cup finals' most unwanted record - 10 matches without a win - when they play their fellow outsiders, Mexico.

The Mexicans' confidence has been hit by a dismal warm-up programme and they face highly motivated opponents who are determined to win their first finals game ahead of the 2002 World Cup, which South Korea is co-hosting with Japan.

"This is our fourth successive World Cup but we have never won

a match, so for that reason the game against Mexico is a decisive one for us," said Cho Chung-yun, the general secretary of the South Korean Football Association.

Mexico's coach, Manuel Lapuente, is being guarded following a run of bad results that culminated last month in a 5-2 loss in Norway and a humiliating 4-1 defeat to a German club side, VfL Wolfsburg.

In today's other Group E fixture at the Stade de France, the Dutch, the scorers of 10 goals in their last two games, are up against against a Belgian side thirsting for revenge after their humiliation in the World Cup qualifying competition.

Belgium were beaten twice in qualifiers by their neighbours, whose first-choice front line of Patrick Kluivert, Dennis Bergkamp, when fully fit, and Marc Overmars is probably the most potent at the finals.

A lot of Belgian pride is at stake but their coach, Georges Leekens, insists he is already looking past the Dutch game to Mexico a week later.

"I've always said 'Mexico, Mexico, Mexico' ever since the World Cup draw," Leekens said. "If we beat Mexico and South Korea, we qualify for the second round. The rest is just a bonus."

For his part, the Dutch coach, Guus Hiddink, is having a hard time

convincing an ebullient public back home that his side are not certainties for the second round - and maybe a lot further. He was concerned by a draw 0-0 draw with Cameroon but after two 5-1 wins in subsequent friendlies, over Paraguay and Nigeria, he seems concerned that the mood may have swung too far the other way.

"The Belgians are much cannier, much more cunning," he said - and he is probably right.

The Belgians are also a better side than the one the Dutch beat 3-0 and 3-1 in qualifying. Their defence is likely to be much tighter despite the absence of the man-marker



Clemente: Time for action

Gordan Vidovic through injury. Up front, the pairing of Fiorentina's Luis Oliveira and PSV Eindhoven's Luc Nilis are fit and in form.

sell-off
fears
safety

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO FRANCE '98

YESTERDAY'S MATCHES

Paraguay 0 Bulgaria 0

GROUP D: STADE DE LA MOISSON, MONTPELLIER. ATTENDANCE: 27,650

Goals: 0
Yellow cards: 1 (Benitez)
Red cards: 0
Corners: 6
Offside: 0
Free-kicks (against): 15
Coach: Paulo Cesar Carpegiani

Goals: 0
Yellow cards: 3 (Nankov, Ivanov, Stoichkov)
Red cards: 1 (Nankov)
Corners: 9
Offside: 1
Free-kicks (against): 22
Coach: Hristo Bonev

Running commentary

1 min: Blakovic unleashes an ominous 25-yard volley, but to no avail.
3 min: Stoichkov appeals loudly but unsuccessfully for penalty.
5 min: Iliev's break and subsequent solid low shot at goal begins long period of Bulgarian pressure.
13 min: Ivanov hits free-kick through wall. Chilavert stands on his line, for a change.
27 min: Nankov yellow card (for a foul on Campos).
35 min: Stoichkov hits the post. Ball deflects away.
40 min: Chilavert turns away purposeful, bending free-kick from Ivanov.
41 min: Bulgaria caught by rare counter-attack leaving Cardozo with clear shot, which he misses badly.
44 min: Yellow card Benitez (studs up on Ivanov).
45 min: Yellow card Stoichkov (felling Benitez).
50 min: Benitez finds space in front of goal. Ball bounces unkindly but Paraguay brighten.
61 min: Paraguay's goalkeeper, Chilavert, brings welcome fun, taking a characteristic 30-yard run to start good attack.
64 min: Stoichkov cuts ball back cleverly. Penev wastes great chance.
71 min: Ivanov yellow card (foul on Campos).
72 min: Chilavert goes up to take superb, curling free-kick. Zdravkov gets fingers to ball, just.
80 min: Dangerman Benitez almost lifts ball over Zdravkov.
86 min: Zdravkov comes out to make crucial interception.
87 min: Red card Nankov (late challenge on Yegorov).

Saudi Arabia 0 Denmark 1

GROUP C: STADE FELIX-BOLLAERT, LENS. ATTENDANCE: 38,140

Goal: Rieper 68
Yellow cards: 1 (Al-Muwallid)
Red cards: 0
Corners: 4
Offside: 0
Free-kicks (against): 15
Coach: Carlos Alberto Parreira

Goal: Rieper 68
Yellow cards: 3 (Wiegorst, Rieper, Nielsen)
Red cards: 0
Corners: 4
Offside: 3
Free-kicks (against): 15
Coach: Bo Johansson

Running commentary

5 min: High Danish corner troubles Saudi defence.
10 min: Yellow card Al-Muwallid (late challenge on Jorgensen).
12 min: Yellow card Wiegorst (foul on Sayeed Al-Ghailani).
17 min: Sand exposes Saudi lack of defensive height without taking chance.
30 min: Wiegorst blasts long shot hard and high, summing up game so far.
32 min: Jorgensen does the same.
41 min: Saudi Arabia's first test of Schmeichel who capably saves Solaimani's powerful shot which was going wide.
46 min: Sand drives shot at Al-Daye.
47 min: Schmeichel relieves his boredom with accurate headed clearance.
57 min: Jorgensen's point blank shot blocked by legs of Al-Daye.
59 min: Yellow card Rieper (debating ref's decision on free-kick).
65 min: Bo Johansson sends on Nielsen.
66 min: Schmeichel has first cause to complain about hesitant defence.
68 min: Schmeichel forgives everyone as Rieper heads in Jorgensen's high ball.
72 min: Yellow card Nielsen (over zealous pushing of Al-Khateeb).
78 min: Nielsen's shot pushed away splendidly by Al-Daye.

THURSDAY'S LATE MATCH

Cameroon 1 Austria 1

GROUP B: STADE MUNICIPAL, TOULOUSE. ATTENDANCE: 31,800

Goal: Njankaa 77
Yellow cards: 1 (Ipoua)
Red cards: 0
Corners: 5
Offside: 2
Free-kicks (against): 15
Coach: Claude Le Roy

Goal: Polster 90
Yellow cards: 1 (Pfeffer)
Red cards: 0
Corners: 6
Offside: 2
Free-kicks (against): 13
Coach: Herbert Prohaska

Running commentary

3 min: Ipoua given free header by Austrians.
6 min: Feiersinger important clearance as Cameroon maintain bright, powerful pressure.
15 min: West, on Austria's left side, breaks through dangerously, not for the first time.
19 min: Omani Blyk's first opening, but only a hopeful header from 15 yards.
28 min: Angbeaud's accurate long shot well dealt with by Kinsel, stretching.
33 min: Lack of composure again spoils Cameroon build-up. Angbeaud shoots wide.
35 min: Worme rifles free-kick through Austrian wall but Kinsel parries confidently.
58 min: At last. Terrific, accurate long drive by Worme forces Kinsel to make fine push over.
70 min: Polster takes free-kick on edge of Cameroon penalty area and pierces big wall of defenders. Songo'o blocks safely on his line.
73 min: Songo'o again shows ability, pushing over a fierce shot from Pfeifferberger.
77 min: Style and flair surfaces as Njankaa weaves at speed down left side past lunges before cutting in and sliding shot in.
82 min: Austria send on three substitutes.
90 min: From corner, Pfeffer heads down and Polster blasts in equaliser.

WORLD CUP BETTING

LABELLED the great under-achievers, Spain look set to surprise a few people and can get off to the perfect start by beating Nigeria (maybe 2-0 - Stanley go 7-1) at Nantes this afternoon.

Alfonso (6-1 with Lad-brokers) looks a fair bet to be first goalscorer.

Mexico should beat South Korea (though perhaps only 1-0 - Ladbrokes offer 1-1-2) at Lyons. **Hernandez** - 6-1 with Stanley - looks the best wager for first goalscorer.

The **Netherlands**, with Bergkamp back, should take Belgium apart (maybe 3-0 - 11-1 with Stanley) at St-Denis this evening. **Kluivert** generally 5-1 - looks the best bet to notch the opening goal.

Ian Davies

SPAIN v NIGERIA				
Spain	evens	4.5	8-11	10-11
Nigeria	evens	2.1	11.5	12.5
Draw	evens	2.1	11.5	12.5
Goalscorers		1.5	3-4	11-14
C Goals: H. Williams, H. L. Williams, S. Stanley, V. T. Tote				

SOUTH KOREA v MEXICO				
South Korea	evens	10-11	6.5	5.5
Mexico	evens	2.1	11.5	12.5
Draw	evens	2.1	11.5	12.5
Goalscorers		1.5	3-4	11-14
C Goals: H. Williams, H. L. Williams, S. Stanley, V. T. Tote				

NETHERLANDS v BELGIUM				
Netherlands	evens	5-11	6-11	6-11
Belgium	evens	11.5	11.5	11.5
Draw	evens	11.5	11.5	11.5
Goalscorers		1.5	3-4	11-14
C Goals: H. Williams, H. L. Williams, S. Stanley, V. T. Tote				

SPREAD BETTING

THEY HAVEN'T even played and Argentina have been the biggest mover in the World Cup Index markets. At the beginning of May they were 60-65 with Sporting, by Tuesday they had advanced to 70-75 and are now 75-80. City, with a different scoring system, have gone from 25-33 to 37-41 and make them second favourites.

It is no surprise then that they have also risen in the total goals market. This is an another way of backing a team to do well and the 9-9.8 with City may look a steal after tomorrow's match against Japan.

Even if Batistuta and Ortega do not initially live up to their billing with IG as favourites in their 'Dynamic Duo Index' the South Americans can cash in with Jamaica in their final Group H game.

There has been a Black Monday-type collapse in the markets for yellow and red cards after the opening four games saw just 12 yellows flourished and no reds. IG, who went as high as 325 yellow cards at one stage, now quote 268-278.

For red cards it's a similar story, once 49 but now slashed to 22-24. Such early leniency has lead Sporting to more than halve their 'Magic Stretch' Index. Yugoslavia's 12-1 play-off thrashing of Hungary is obviously behind their rather high total goals quote - 8-8.8 with three companies.

Germany and the defensive USA are also in Group F so it's far better to take the total goals in their opening match against Iran tomorrow. PS Shame on any Sporting clients who got a better price by singing the title of their 'Sheikh It All Over' market for the Saudi Arabia-Denmark match yesterday.

Richard Wetherell

TODAY'S MATCHES

Spain v Nigeria

GROUP D: STADE DE LA BEAUJOIRE, NANTES. KICK-OFF: 13.30 BST

SERGI	RAUL	GEORGE	EGUAVOEN
NADAL	ALFONSO	KANU	BABAYARO
LUIS ENRIQUE	ADEPOJU	KURAI	
ZUBIZARRETA	KIMO	IKPEBA	OLISEH
HIERRO	GUERRERO	OKECHUKWU	
FERRER	AMOR	OKOCHA	WEST

WEATHER: Cloudy with a chance of thunderstorms later. Temperature: 19C

REFEREE: E. BAHAMAST (US)

TV LIVE: BBC1 1.10 LIVE: EUROSPORT 1.20

SPAIN
1 Andoni Zubizarreta.....Valencia
2 Albert Ferrer.....Barcelona
3 Agustin Aranzabal.....Real Sociedad
4 Rafael Alkorta.....Athletic Bilbao
5 Abelardo.....Barcelona
6 Fernando Hierro.....Real Madrid
7 Francisco Montes.....Real Madrid
8 Julian Guerrero.....Athletic Bilbao
9 Juan Antonio Pizzi.....Barcelona
10 Raul.....Real Madrid
11 Alfonso.....Mallorca
12 Sergi.....Barcelona
13 Santiago Canizares.....Real Madrid
14 Ivan Campo.....Mallorca
15 Carlos Aguilera.....Atletico Madrid
16 Albert Celades.....Barcelona
17 Joseba Etxeberria.....Athletic Bilbao
18 Guillermo Amor.....Barcelona
19 Kiko.....Atletico Madrid
20 Miguel Angel Nadal.....Barcelona
21 Luis Enrique.....Barcelona
22 Jose Molina.....Atletico Madrid
Coach: Javier Clemente

TEAM NEWS
SPAIN: No major injuries, and Luis Enrique and Raul are certain starters at the heart of Spanish side.
NIGERIA: Daniel Amokachi was kept out of training with a knee injury at the start of the week and may not be fit. No previous meetings.

NIGERIA
1 Peter Rufai.....Depot La Corvia
2 Mubi Aparaku.....Kapellen
3 Celestine Babayaro.....Chelsea
4 Nwanwuko Kanu.....Internationale
5 Uche Okechukwu.....Fenerbahce
6 Taribo West.....Internationale
7 Flidi George.....Real Betis
8 Muril Adepoju.....Real Sociedad
9 Rashidi Yekini.....FC Zurich
10 Austin Okocha.....Fenerbahce
11 Garba Lawal.....Roda JC Kerkrade
12 Muril Adepoju.....Real Sociedad
13 Sunday Oshin.....Orlando Pirates
14 Tjani Babangida.....Ajax
15 Daniel Amokachi.....Besiktas
16 Uche Okechukwu.....FC Zurich
17 Augustine Ekwonke.....Torpedo Moscow
18 Wilson Oruma.....Lens
19 Ben Iroha.....Elche
20 Victor Ikpeba.....Monaco
21 Godwin Oparua.....Strasbourg
22 Abiodun Banwo.....St. Etienne
Coach: Bora Milutinovic

South Korea v Mexico

GROUP E: STADE GERLAND, LYONS. KICK-OFF: 16.30 BST

LEE SANG-HUN	YOO SANG-CHUL	BERNAL	J SANCHEZ
HONG MYUNG-BO	HUANG SUN-HONG	BLANCO	CARMONA
KIM BYUNG-JI	KIM DO-KEUN	GARCIA	PELAEZ
LEE MIN-SUNG	CHOI YONG-SOO	HERNANDEZ	VILLA
LEE SANG-YOON	CHOI SUNG-YONG	LARA	TERRAZAS
KIM TAE-YOUNG			

WEATHER: Rain and a chance of thunderstorms later. Temperature: 17C

REFEREE: G. BENKOE (AUSTRIA)

TV LIVE: ITV 4.15 LIVE: EUROSPORT 4.20

SOUTH KOREA
1 Kim Byung-Ji.....Ulsan Hyundai
2 Choi Sung-yong.....Sangmu
3 Lee Lim-seung.....Puchon SK
4 Choi Young-il.....Pusan Daewoo
5 Lee Min-sung.....Pusan Daewoo
6 Yoo Sang-chul.....Ulsan Hyundai
7 Kim Do-keun.....Chunnam Dragons
8 Noh Jung-yoon.....NAC Breda
9 Kim Do-han.....Vissel Kobe
10 Choi Young-soo.....Sangmu
11 Seo Jung-won.....Strasbourg
12 Lee Sang-hun.....Anyang LG
13 Kim Tae-young.....Chunnam Dragons
14 Jo Jong-soo.....Sangmu
15 Lee Sang-yoon.....Chunnam Ilhwa
16 Hong Myung-bo.....Bellmare Hiratsuka
17 Lee Seok-hi.....Cerezo Osaka
18 Hwang Sun-hong.....Pohang Steelers
19 Dae Il-jang.....Chunnam Ilhwa
20 Hong Hyun-jae.....Bellmare Hiratsuka
21 Lee Dong-gook.....Pohang Steelers
22 Seo Dong-myung.....Sangmu
Coach: Cha Bum-Kun

TEAM NEWS
SOUTH KOREA: Experienced striker Hwang Sun-hong will miss his side's first two matches, with a knee injury. Midfielder Choi Sung-yong, who has an ankle strain, is out for one match but expected to return to play the Netherlands.
MEXICO: No major injury worries. Previous meetings no statistics available.

MEXICO
1 Jorge Campos.....UNAM
2 Claudio Suarez Sanchez.....Guadalajara
3 Joel Sanchez.....Guadalajara
4 German Villa.....America
5 Dulio Davino.....America
6 Marcelino Bernal.....Monterrey
7 Jesus Ramirez.....Guadalajara
8 Alberto Garcia Aspe.....America
9 Ricardo Pelaez.....America
10 Luis Garcia.....Atlante
11 Cuauhtemoc Blanco.....Necaxa
12 Oswaldo Sanchez.....America
13 Pavel Pardo.....Atlas
14 Raul Lara.....America
15 Luis Hernandez.....Necaxa
16 Isaac Terrazas.....America
17 Francisco Palencia.....Cruz Azul
18 Salvador Carranza.....Toluca
19 Braulio Luna.....UNAM
20 Jaime Ortiz.....Toluca
21 Jesus Arellano.....Guadalajara
22 Oscar Perez.....Cruz Azul
Coach: Manuel Lapuente

Netherlands v Belgium

GROUP E: STADE DE FRANCE, ST DENIS, PARIS. KICK-OFF: 20.00 BST

NUMAN	OVERMARS	VAN DER ELST	CRASSON
J DE BOER	SEEDORT	OLIVEIRA	CLEMENT
VAN DER SAR	HASSELEBANK	CLEMENT	STAELENS
STAM	COCU	WILMOTS	VAN MEIR
REIZIGER	N DE BOER	BOFFIN	BOERKELMANS

WEATHER: Thunderstorms early, likely to clear later. Temperature: 18C

REFEREE: P. COLLINA (ITALY)

TV LIVE: BBC1 7.30 LIVE: EUROSPORT 7.20

NETHERLANDS
1 Edwin van der Sar.....Ajax
2 Michael Reiziger.....Barcelona
3 Jaap Stam.....PSV Eindhoven
4 Frank de Boer.....Ajax
5 Arun Numankang.....Bellmare Hiratsuka
6 Wim Jonk.....PSV Eindhoven
7 Ronald de Boer.....Ajax
8 Dennis Bergkamp.....Arsenal
9 Patrick Kluivert.....Milan
10 Clarence Seedorf.....Real Madrid
11 Phillip Cocu.....PSV Eindhoven
12 Bouddewijn Zenden.....PSV Eindhoven
13 Andre Ooster.....PSV Eindhoven
14 Marc Overmars.....Arsenal
15 Winston Bogarde.....Barcelona
16 Edgar Davids.....Juventus
17 Pierre van Hooijdonk.....Nottm Forest
18 Ed De Goeij.....Chelsea
19 Giovanni van Bronckhorst.....Rangers
20 Aron Winter.....Internationale
21 Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink.....Leeds
22 Ruud Hesp.....Barcelona
Coach: Guus Hiddink

TEAM NEWS
NETHERLANDS: Dennis Bergkamp will be on the bench. Michael Reiziger and Aron Winter contest the right-back spot.
BELGIUM: Gordan Vidovic is out with a strained adductor muscle. Marc Wilmots will be preferred to Enzo Sofic.

Previous five meetings: 6 Sep 1997 (Rotterdam, WC qual) Belgium 1 Netherlands 3, 14 Dec 1996 (Brussels, WC qual) Belgium 0 Netherlands 3, 28 Jan 1995 (Orlando, USA 96) Belgium 1 Netherlands 0, 3 Sep 1987 (Rotterdam, friendly) Belgium 0 Netherlands 0, 16 Oct 1985 (Brussels, friendly) Belgium 1 Netherlands 0.

BELGIUM
1 Filip De Wilde.....Anderlecht
2 Bertrand Crasson.....Napoli
3 Lorenzo Staelens.....Club Brugge
4 Gordan Vidovic.....Mouscron
5 Vital Borkelmans.....Club Brugge
6 Franky Van der Elst.....Club Brugge
7 Marc Wilmots.....Schalke 04
8 Luis Oliveira.....Florentina
9 Mico Mpenza.....Standard Liege
10 Luc Nils.....PSV Eindhoven
11 Nico Van der Kerkhof.....Lierse
12 Philippe Vande Walle.....Aalst
13 Danny Verlinden.....Club Brugge
14 Enzo Sofic.....Anderlecht
15 Philippe Clement.....Genk
16 Glen De Boeck.....Anderlecht
17 Mike Verschaeren.....Germinal Ekeren
18 Gert Verheyen.....Club Brugge
19 Eric Van Meer.....Lierse
20 Lolkenda Mpenza.....Standard Liege
21 Danny Boffin.....Metz
22 Eric Deflandre.....Club Brugge
Coach: Georges Leekens

SUNDAY'S MATCHES

GROUP H
Argentina v Japan
In Toulouse
Kick-off: 13.30 BST
TV: LIVE: ITV, Eurosport
Referee: Mario van der Ende (Netherlands)
Previous World Cup finals appearances: Argentina 11, Japan 0.
Honours: Argentina: Winners 1978, 1986. Runners-up: 1930, 1990.
Team news: Japan's Masami Hara is now fit. Argentina's Hernan Crespo is still injured.
Previous meetings: 8 January 1985 (Riyadh, Conference Cup) Argentina 5 Japan 1.

GROUP F
Yugoslavia v Iran
In St Etienne
Kick-off: 16.30 BST
TV: LIVE: BBC 1, Eurosport
Referee: Alberto Tejada Noriega (Peru)
Previous World Cup finals appearances: Yugoslavia 8, Iran 1.
Team news: Yugoslavia's main striker, Dejan Savicevic, hopes to be fit despite a nagging knee injury, otherwise Dejan Stanovic will play.
Previous meetings: 5 April 1978 (Tehran, friendly), Iran 0 Yugoslavia 0, 20 January 1985 (Cooen, friendly), Iran 1 Yugoslavia 3.

GROUP H
Jamaica v Croatia
In Lens
Kick-off: 20.00 BST
TV: LIVE: ITV, Eurosport
Referee: Manuel Melo Pereira (Portugal)
Previous World Cup finals appearances: Jamaica 0, Croatia 0.
Team news: Croatian striker Alen Boksic is out with a knee injury and Mario Stanic is likely to move from midfield to take his place. Defender Staven Bilic muscle injury is doubtful.
No previous meetings.

TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

Group A
Brazil 2 Scotland 1 (St Denis)
Morocco 2 Norway 2 (Montpellier)
Tue 16 June Scotland v Norway (Bordeaux, 16.30)
Tue 16 June Brazil v Morocco (Nantes, 20.00)
Tue 23 June Scotland v Morocco (St Etienne, 20.00)
Tue 23 June Brazil v Norway (Marseille, 20.00)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	Goalscorers
1 Brazil.....	1	1	0	0	2	1	3	C Sampaio 1, og 1
2 Morocco.....	1	0	1	0	2	2	1	Hadji 1, Hadda 1
3 Norway.....	1	0	1	0	2	2	1	Eggen 1, og 1
4 Scotland.....	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	Collins 1

Group B
Italy 2 Chile 2 (Bordeaux)
Cameroon 1 Austria 1 (Toulouse)
Wed 17 June Chile v Austria (St Etienne, 16.30)
Wed 17 June Italy v Cameroon (Montpellier, 20.00)
Tue 23 June Italy v Austria (St-Denis, 15.00)
Tue 23 June Chile v Cameroon (Nantes, 15.00)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	Goalscorers
1 Chile.....	1	0	1	0	2	2	1	Salas 2
2 Italy.....	1	0	1	0	2	2	1	Vieri 1, R Baggio 1
3 Austria.....	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	Polster 1
4 Cameroon.....	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	Njankaa 1

Group C
Yesterday Saudi Arabia 0 Denmark 1 (Lens)
Yesterday France v South Africa (Marseille, 20.00)
Thu 18 June South Africa v Denmark (Toulouse, 16.30)
Thu 18 June France v Saudi Arabia (St-Denis, 20.00)
Wed 24 June France v Denmark (Lyons, 15.00)
Wed 24 June South Africa v Saudi Arabia (Bordeaux, 15.00)

Group D
Yesterday Paraguay 0 Bulgaria 0 (Montpellier)
Today Spain v Nigeria (Nantes, 13.30)
Fri 19 June Nigeria v Bulgaria (Paris, 16.30)
Fri 19 June Spain v Paraguay (St Etienne, 20.00)
Wed 24 June Spain v Bulgaria (Lens, 20.00)
Wed 24 June Nigeria v Paraguay (Toulouse 20.00)

Group E
Today South Korea v Mexico (Lyons, 16.30)
Today Netherlands v Belgium (St-Denis, 20.00)
Sat 20 June Belgium v Mexico (Bordeaux, 16.30)
Sat 20 June Netherlands v S Korea (Marseille, 20.00)
Thu 25 June Netherlands v Mexico (St Etienne, 15.00)
Thu 25 June Belgium v South Korea (Paris, 15.00)

Group F
Tomorrow Yugoslavia v Iran (St Etienne, 16.30)
Mon 15 June Germany v USA (Paris, 20.00)
Sun 21 June Germany v Yugoslavia (Lens, 13.30)
Sun 21 June USA v Iran (Lyons, 20.00)
Thu 25 June Germany v Iran (Montpellier, 20.00)
Thu 25 June USA v Yugoslavia (Nantes, 20.00)

Group G
Mon 15 June England v Tunisia (Marseille, 13.30)
Mon 15 June Romania v Colombia (Lyons, 16.30)
Mon 22 June Colombia v Tunisia (Montpellier, 16.30)
Mon 22 June Romania v England (Toulouse, 20.00)
Fri 26 June Romania v Tunisia (St Denis, 20.00)
Fri 26 June Colombia v England (Lens, 20.00)

Group H
Tomorrow Argentina v Japan (Toulouse, 13.30)
Tomorrow Jamaica v Croatia (Lens, 20.00)
Sat 20 June Japan v Croatia (Nantes, 13.30)
Sat 20 June Argentina v Jamaica (Paris, 16.30)
Fri 26 June Argentina v Croatia (Bordeaux, 15.00)
Fri 26 June Japan v Jamaica (Lyons, 15.00)

Second round
Sat 27 June Winner B v Runner-up A (Marseille, 15.30)
Sat 27 June Winner A v Runner-up B (Paris, 20.00)
Sun 28 June Winner C v Runner-up D (Lens, 15.30)
Sun 28 June Winner D v Runner-up C (St Denis, 20.00)
Mon 29 June Winner F v Runner-up E (Montpellier, 15.30)
Mon 29 June Winner E v Runner-up F (Toulouse, 20.00)
Tue 30 June Winner G v Runner-up H (Bordeaux, 15.30)
Tue 30 June Winner H v Runner-up G (St Etienne, 20.00)

Quarter-finals
Fri 3 July Marseille winner v Lens winner (St-Denis, 15.30)
Fri 3 July Paris v St Denis winner (Nantes, 20.00)
Sat 4 July Toulouse winner v St Etienne winner (Marseille, 15.30)
Sat 4 July Montpellier winner v Bordeaux winner (Lyons, 20.00)

Semi-finals
Tue 7 July Nantes winner v Marseille winner (Marseille, 20.00)
Wed 8 July Paris St Denis winner v Lyons winner (St Denis, 20.00)

Third place play-off
Saturday 11 July (Paris, 20.00)

FINAL
Sunday 12 July (St Denis, 20.00)

STATISTICS OF THE DAY	TEAM OF THE DAY
1 THE NUMBER of games that Spain have lost in their last 34 matches	CHELSEA PRESENT AND FUTURE WORLD CUP XI
2 THE NUMBER of times (in two matches) the Netherlands beat Belgium in qualifying games (4-0 and 3-1)	Ed De Goeij (Holland)
10 THE RECORD number of World Cup finals matches without a win - held by South Korea in four final tournaments	Graeme Le Saux (England)
55 THE ESTIMATED television audience (in millions) expected to watch today's Mexico game in Mexico	Dan Petrescu (Romania)
119 THE NUMBER of previous meetings between the Netherlands and Belgium before today	Frank Sinclair (Jamaica)
222 THE NUMBER of international matches the Nigeria coach, Bora Milutinovic, has been in charge during spells at Mexico, Costa Rica, the United States and Nigeria, before today's game	Albert Ferrer (Spain)
	Francis Lebour (France)
	Celestine Babayaro (Nigeria)
	Roberto Di Matteo (Italy)
	Marcel Desailly (France)
	Tore Andre Flo (Norway)
	Brian Laudrup (Denmark)
	Be-Scamford Bridge Substitutes:
	Glenn Hoddle (England)
	Craig Burley (Scotland)
	Frode Grodås (Norway)
	Gordon Durie (Scotland)
	Torrey Boyd (Scotland)

SPORT

ORANGE MEN AT PEACE P19 SAMPRAS HUMBLD AT QUEEN'S P23

Rieper rises to delight Danes

By Paul Newman
at Stade Felix-Bollaert, LensDenmark
Rieper 68
Saudi Arabia

Att: 38,140



DENMARK MAY not be the force they were when winning the European Championship six years ago, but they took the first step yesterday towards making their mark on this World Cup. The Danes' combination of physical strength and good technique – largely in the shape of Brian Laudrup – proved too much for a Saudi Arabia team who only briefly found their stride.

But for some poor finishing, the Danes would have had the match sewn up by half-time and, in the end, it took a 67th-minute goal by Celtic's Marc Rieper to settle the game. However, the Danes should qualify from the group and France, the favourites, could find them difficult opponents.

For the three Danes who were playing in Old Firm matches last season – Brian Laudrup, Marc Rieper and Morten Wieghorst – the weather must have felt more like Glasgow in March than France in June. With rain in the air and an overcast sky, the chilly conditions made the Stade Felix-Bollaert seem a far cry from the Saudi Arabian homeland.

Lens, where England will play their final group game against Colombia, is the smallest town ever to stage a match in the World Cup finals. The 41,000 capacity ground can comfortably accommodate the local town's whole population and before the game the Danish invasion turned the streets into a sea of red and white. Although one enterprising Saudi supporter with a loud-

speaker ensured that his side were not without vocal backing inside the stadium, the Danish fans vastly outnumbered their opponents.

In the circumstances, it was no surprise that it was Denmark who were the quicker into their stride. Brian Laudrup, who will be wearing Chelsea's colours next season, had a roving role upfront alongside the powerful striker Ebbe Sand and the pair quickly made inroads into the uncertain, stuttering Saudi defence. Laudrup, in particular, showed some delightful touches and dribbling skills as he took on the Saudi defenders.

However, it was in the air that Denmark caused the most problems. Sand and Wieghorst won almost every aerial challenge in the penalty area and created a series of openings in the first half which should have brought some greater reward.

The best chance fell to Sand, who shot over the bar from close range after Wieghorst's knock-down. The Celtic man himself fired over the bar after Soren Colding had won yet another header, while Rieper was denied by Mohammed Al-Daye, the Saudi goalkeeper, when following up his own header.

The Saudis had shown little of the enterprise that made them such dangerous opponents in the last World Cup, though they started to get into the game just before the interval and the Denmark goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel made a flying save from Hussain Solaimani's free-kick.

Yet having held out in the first half, the Saudis played with more assurance after the break. Their possession football began to frustrate both Denmark and their fans, who started whistling as much in frustration at their own side's failure to impose themselves as in disapproval of the Saudis' go-slow tactics.

Sami Al-Jaber, the Saudis' most dangerous forward, found some



Thomas Helveg of Denmark is sent flying by the challenge of Saudi Arabia's Khamis Al-Owairan yesterday

Allsport

space in front of the Danish back four and the red and white defence looked uncomfortable as he started to run at them with confidence. The elegant Khalid Al-Muwahid was also getting into the game and his skills set up the Saudis' best chance so far, though Foad Amin was unable

to provide the necessary finishing touch.

The Danes had failed to provide the crosses which had caused so much trouble in the first half but just when it seemed they were losing their hold on the match they scored in typical fashion. Brian Laudrup

found space on the right and his cross was firmly headed into the net by the unmarked Rieper at the far post.

DENMARK (4-4-2): Schmeichel (Manchester United); Colding (Brondby), Rieper (Celtic), Hveg (Fenerbahce), Schmeichel (Kaiserslautern); Jorgensen (Odense), Helveg (Odense), Wieghorst (Celtic), Al-Laudrup (Ajax); B-Laudrup (Chelsea), Sand (Brondby), Substitutes:

Melsson (Nottingham Forest) for Wieghorst; 65: Frandsen (Bolton Wanderers) for Jorgensen; 73: Helveg (Royer Lovenkoven) for B-Laudrup; 83: SAUDI ARABIA: Al-Daye (Al-Jed); Al-Jed (Al-Ahli), Al-Rashed (Al-Ittihad), Zebrenawi (Al-Ahli), Solaimani (Al-Ahli), Al-Ghannam (Al-Ahli), Auda (Al-Shabab), K Al-Qadiri (Al-Hilal), Al-Shamali (Al-Ahli); Al-Jaber (Al-Hilal), S Al-Qadiri (Al-Hilal), Substitutes: Saleh (Al-Ahli) for Amin; 78: Al-Dawsari (Al-Hilal) for S Al-Qadiri; 79: Al-Thaghran (Al-Hilal) for Al-Jaber; 86: Referee: J Castelli (Argentina).

Black market tickets inquiry

By KIM SENGUPTA

FIFA HAS started an investigation into claims that World Cup tickets have been sold on the black market by the national association of a South American country.

Football's world ruling body has also received reports indicating this is not an isolated incident, and a number of other national associations may have supplied tickets to unauthorised channels instead of returning them for reallocation.

It is believed that one of the reasons for the acute shortage of tickets is that these have dropped out of the system. Fifa had assumed that some of the allocation, especially to third-world countries, would not be used and put back in the general pot.

The inquiry launched yesterday concerns an unnamed South American football association. Fifa's acting general secretary Michel Zen-Ruffinen said he could not name the country until its association has been officially notified.

The Cameroonian football association is already the subject of an inquiry, and its president, Vincent Onana, was arrested last week as he was about the leave for France.

Mr Zen-Ruffinen said: "We believe that in South America there is certainly one association which has acted in this way, either on an individual basis or in the name of the federation, and the inquiry will show us."

"It is likely that the vast majority of the tickets sent to the Cameroon Football Federation by Fifa were resold by individuals to markets in other countries, either to individuals or to private companies."

Fifa and the French Organising Committee (CFO) both say they distributed all the 2.65 million tickets for France 98 to approved organisations or national federations. However a consultant who worked for ISL Worldwide, Fifa's exclusive marketing partner, is under investigation for "fraudulently promising to sell several thousand tickets."

French police have arrested Russell John O'Connell, a Briton working for a Swedish company, after he was allegedly found with 125 tickets for the Morocco Norway game. He is said to have been selling tickets outside the ground. Police sources say they are investigating if Mr O'Connell has links with others suspected of large scale touting.

In the meantime a growing number of fans are complaining they have purchased tickets which have failed to materialise. Among them are a large group of Japanese fans already in France, who find they have not got the tickets which should have been waiting for them.

In one of the worst examples so far of chaotic conditions regarding ticket sales, 12,000 tickets destined for Japan have gone missing. Bruno Travardi, a spokesman for the World Cup organising committee, said three licensed ticket agencies had picked up their allocations, and efforts were being made to discover what happened to them.

Hat-trick Hurst scores a knighthood

GEOFF HURST, England's World Cup final hat-trick hero, was yesterday "thrilled to bits" to be made a knight in the Queen's Birthday Honours and hoped that it would encourage the England squad in France.

Sir Geoff, whose three goals steered England to victory over West Germany in the 1966 final at Wembley, said: "I never expected this in my wildest dreams. I am just very honoured. I am delighted. It is a reflection of the team success that we had all those years ago."

Sir Geoff, 56, told of the emotional moment several weeks ago when the letter arrived from the Queen asking if he would accept the honour.

"My wife opened the letter and then just passed it to me. It was a very tearful moment in the Hurst household," the former England and West Ham striker, said. "When you are my age, this comes as quite a shock. When I was younger it seemed easier to absorb."

"I am very proud and so is my

family. It has been very difficult to keep this secret and not tell even close friends."

Sir Geoff, who now lives in Surrey and is the successful director of a multi-million pound insurance company, was speaking to journalists at Wembley Stadium, next to the very goal where he scored the last of his three strikes against West Germany.

As he posed for photographers, some of the journalists spilled on to

the grass. This prompted the warning from one of the Wembley staff – "they are on the pitch" – in an unexpected echo of the famous TV commentary by Kenneth Wolstenholme that accompanied the final goal 32 years ago.

Sir Geoff, who was unable to talk in detail about the chances of Glenn Hoddle's squad winning 1998 World Cup because he is contracted to a newspaper, did say he thought his knighthood would encourage the

current England team. "The timing is impeccable and I just hope the lads can emulate that achievement of all those years ago," he said. "I send them my best wishes."

Sir Geoff added that his memory of the 1966 final and the moment he scored the final goal was still as clear as if it were yesterday. "It is being involved in a great team and a great day for the country. It is not something I will ever get away from. It has had a huge impact on my life."

He is the second member of the World Cup winning team to be knighted – the first was Sir Bobby Charlton.

Wolstenholme, a former RAF bomber pilot, is more concerned that Hurst remembers an old Air Force custom. "I will remind him that the principle in the RAF when you received a gong was that you bought drinks all round," he said.

Queen's Birthday Honours, Weekend Review, page 8-9

TODAY: SPAIN V NIGERIA (1.30). SOUTH KOREA V MEXICO (4.30). NETHERLANDS V BELGIUM (8.0)

Rusedski's Wimbledon doubt

By John Roberts
at Queen's Club

WIMBLEDON is in the balance for Greg Rusedski, who sprained ligaments in his left ankle in a fall while competing at the Stella Artois tournament yesterday, only 10 days before the All England Club Championships are due to start.

Rusedski, the world No 4 and British No 1, was taken to the Cromwell Hospital for x-rays and, if necessary, an MRI scan. The injury occurred at 2-2, 30-30, in the first set of the second-seeded Rusedski's third-round match against Laurence Tielemans, an Italian qualifier. During Tielemans' service game, the left-handed Rusedski moved towards the net from the baseline to play a backhand volley, screaming as he lost his footing and slid into the tramlines, the left ankle appearing to turn under his body as he fell.

"I felt something go pop," Rusedski told his coach, Tony Pickard, after being helped off the court by Doug Spreen, the ATP Tour trainer, and Jolyon Armstrong, the media director.

The 24-year-old Rusedski was defeated by Cedric Pioline, of France, in the Wimbledon quarter-finals last year. He went on to reach the final at the United States Open in September, losing to the Australian Pat Rafter.

Rusedski's mighty serve – at 149 mph, the fastest ever recorded – his compact volleying and his improved service returns and groundstrokes, had put him among the favourites for the Wimbledon men's singles title.

Corals had quoted him 9-1 second favourite behind Pete Sampras, the four-times champion.

Although rain and wind had affected the first four days play at Queen's Club, yesterday was sunny and tranquil by comparison. "I wouldn't have been at all surprised if it had happened the night before," Pickard said, "but today was a beautiful day and there was nothing wrong with the courts."

At the time, Tim Henman, the British No 2, was in the process of defeating Goran Ivanisevic on the Centre Court, 6-1, 6-7, 6-4. Henman, the No 7 seed, was due to play the winner of the Rusedski-Tielemans match in the quarter-finals.

Although Rusedski will not be able to defend his Nottingham Open title next week, Pickard remains optimistic about Wimbledon. "Greg's very positive in everything he does," Pickard said.

"When it happened, the injury looked bad, but if it is what we have been told it is, we have nine days to get ready for Wimbledon. Considering that things have been going so well with his grass-court preparation, I don't think it is going to be a problem. Mentally he's refreshed. It's not something I'm worrying about too much."

Doug Spreen, the physiotherapist, said: "When I arrived on the court, Greg was laying on his back with his foot propped up. That's not a good sign. When you see a player like that, it usually means that the match is over. In my experience, sprains can vary from very little damage to a lot of damage."

Henman on a high, page 23



Greg Rusedski is attended by the umpire, Norm Christ, after his fall at Queen's Club

Allsport

COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • SHOPPING • TRAVEL



BY ANDREW GUMBEL

Disaster is firmly inscribed on the minds of the four million-odd people who live in the Naples area. A month ago, a cloudburst of early summer rain brought rivers of mud crashing down from the hills 15 miles inland. Turn to page 12

INSIDE	Letters	2	Obituaries	6-7	Features	12-13	Shopping	16-17
	Leaders and Comment	3-5	Birthday Honours	8-9	Gardening	14	Miscellany	18
	Profile	5	Arts	10-11	Outdoors	15	Travel	19-28
								TEN PAGES OF TRAVEL

FREE OFFER!

The image shows a collage of five book covers from the 'London Review of Books' series. Each cover features a black and white photograph of a cat. The titles and authors visible on the covers are:

- Top Left:** 'The Cat in the Hat' by T. S. Eliot
- Top Middle:** 'The Cat in the Hat' by T. S. Eliot
- Top Right:** 'The Cat in the Hat' by T. S. Eliot
- Bottom Left:** 'The Cat in the Hat' by T. S. Eliot
- Bottom Right:** 'The Cat in the Hat' by T. S. Eliot

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ENGAGING THE MIND

2/LETTERS



In the last of our series of pictures from the coast by Nikki English, children enjoy the slightly better weather on the sands at Bognor beach

No EU 'superstate'

Sir: The significance of the letter sent by the French President and the German Chancellor to the Prime Minister this week should not be underestimated ("European superstate is dead, says Kohl", 10 June). In calling for decisions in the European Union to be taken at the closest possible level to the citizen they have endorsed the mission of the British presidency to "give Europe back to the people".

And not before time. As long ago as 1975 the then President of the Commission, François-Xavier Ortoli, said: "European union is not to give birth to a centralising super-state. The Union will be given responsibility only for those matters which member states are no longer capable of dealing with efficiently, other matters being left to member states". This language was echoed two years later by his successor, Roy Jenkins, in a lecture at Florence. But it was not until 1991 at Maastricht that, at the instance of Jacques Delors, the principle of subsidiarity was embodied in a treaty.

Jacques Chirac and Helmut Kohl have not confined themselves to arguing that this principle be more strictly applied in future. Among other things, they also advocate improvement of the working methods of the Council of Ministers and a thorough reform of the structures of the Commission and its services.

With the weight of the three principal members of the Union behind such a programme of reform, there must be a better chance than before that steps will at last be taken to identify the Union more closely with the aspirations and concerns of its citizens.

Apart from this, their clear statement that the objective "has never been and cannot be to build a central European State" should deprive the Eurosceptics of at

least one of their spurious arguments.

Sir DONALD MAITLAND
Bath
The writer was UK Permanent Representative to the European Community, 1975-79

Save the salmon

Sir: Michael McCarthy reports on a growing trend of self-imposed discipline by salmon anglers in the interests of protecting the diminishing salmon populations and their sport ("River rescue plan offers old fish for new", 13 June).

Catch-and-release in the estuary of the Hampshire Avon has been encouraged for four years by Tesco stores, who reward anglers with a farmed salmon and fund the cost of the live purchase and care of netted fish to the tune of several thousand pounds. The result in 1997 was that 89 per cent of fish caught by both methods were returned alive. Tesco have extended their scheme from this season to include the rivers Test, Itchen, Frome, Piddle and Dart. They are also examining further initiatives.

Laudable though such riverine measures are, they will count as nought unless the mass slaughter of salmon at sea by drift-netting is urgently halted. Commendable efforts by ministers to ban this method of fishing for tuna to protect whales and dolphins will not, they tell me, be extended to protect the more seriously endangered North Atlantic Salmon. How blinkered can you get?

The environment agency admits that 52 rivers out of 65 suffered spawning escapement below

minimum target levels in 1997. Salmon caught in 1997 represent a 40 per cent drop against 1996. Nets caught 31,484 fish to rods 13,706, of which 81 North-east drift netters caught 21,922 fish for which they contributed £70,000 licence income (rods approximately £1.2m). The Irish west-coast drift nets are known to capture up to 20 per cent of salmon returning the English and Welsh rivers. There are massive international surpluses of farmed salmon.

Last year just 151 fish were caught off the once famous Hampshire Avon (2,000 in 1986). So far this year, eight have been caught and returned. We may be too late.

B G MARSHALL
Chairman
Wessex Salmon Association
Linton, Cambridgeshire

Winning whistle

Sir: Roger Dobson (Health, 9 June) highlights the plight of "whistleblowers" and the risks they run in exposing wrongdoing. Whilst he rightly describes the stress and difficulty involved with blowing the whistle, I was disappointed to see that the focus was entirely on the negative.

I was in the unfortunate position in 1994 of having to blow the whistle on my boss. I decided after doing this that it would be best to leave the company, my concerns about being thought of as a troublemaker being the same as the ones expressed in your article.

My boss and his seven co-conspirators were found guilty last July and are now in prison. I received a commendation from the

judge and a substantial reward from my employers, who asked me to come back and work for them. I rejoined the company two months ago and am thoroughly enjoying my work with nothing but positive feedback from all my colleagues.

My concern about articles such as this is that others facing situations similar to mine may be discouraged from acting. The attitude to whistleblowing is changing and companies like my current employer have given a lead. If we keep telling the public that whistleblowing will only do them harm, no one will ever do the right thing.

GARY BROWN
Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

We need quarries

Sir: I read with concern the letter from Elaine Gilligan of Friends of the Earth (8 June) commenting on the possible introduction of a quarrying tax. The facts outlined are not correct.

There is a plentiful supply of the natural raw materials that make quarry products, the materials we all depend on for our homes, schools, hospitals, transport network, water and sewerage systems. There is no question of this industry being unsustainable. Moreover, the quarrying industry is strongly committed to improving the environmental performance of the industry and firmly believes that a quarrying tax would bring no environmental benefits. In contrast a more constructive environmental approach will involve the use of regulation, planning controls and voluntary initiatives.

The industry is also promoting

the increased use of recycled aggregates and has already exceeded its recycling targets set for 2001. However, there is only a finite supply for recycling and we will all continue to need virgin materials.

SIMON van der BYL
Director General
Quarry Products Association
London SW1

End of the peers

Sir: Michael Johnson (Letter, 10 June) advocates an entirely elected second chamber to replace the House of Lords. However, this would merely replace the old rotten system of hereditary power and life peerages as political favours with a different kind of rotten system - no one capable of getting themselves elected should on any account be trusted to rule.

Why not select members of the second house at random from the population, as juries are selected? People who are not prepared to take a year's sabbatical from their jobs to serve their country could be allowed to step down.

We would then have a parliamentary body of people who were not interested in power or political manoeuvring or vote-hunting and could therefore do what is right, not what will best benefit their own political careers.

BEATRICE J PURSER
Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

Morning after

Sir: It is so sad to read ("Warning after the night before", 9 June) of people experiencing difficulty in accessing emergency

contraception. Part of the problem for young people at school is that regulations appear to prevent staff giving plain, confidential advice. I have never thought that there are many teachers unwilling or unable to provide it. If I have understood correctly this also governs the actions of school nurses - often a concerned young woman's first resort.

Any young woman appearing at the reception desk of our GP practice, especially if looking either knowing or troubled, is seen within minutes - no questions asked. Sometimes the issue is emergency contraception, sometimes not.

Whilst I am sure that Carol and Imogen are being truthful (and if I had been either of them I would have punched most or all of their inquisitors), there is another tale to tell of prompt, non-judgemental and even friendly provision.

Dr STEVEN FORD
Haydon Bridge,
Northumberland

Beards hit back

Sir: I have had a beard for nearly all of my adult life. I was aware, back in the late 1970s when I grew it, that there was one particular computer company that did not recruit men with beards. This did not bother me; I thought I wouldn't want to work for a company that was so stupid as to include this in their recruitment policy.

I was shocked to read that in 1998 prejudice against beards is so widespread in recruitment policy ("Your career's on a razor's edge", 11 June). I can understand that for

posts that involve persuasive selling to the public recruitment policy may need to follow the prejudices of the market they are selling to, but for general recruitment this is ridiculous.

I will be keeping the beard (and keeping it trim and tidy) safe in the knowledge that I will not inadvertently end up working where merit and ability are not prime concerns.

ADAM B COOKE
London W14

IN BRIEF

Sir: The almost universal support for Kosovo's independence, ignoring the "principle" of recognising a country's territorial integrity (Serbia's) is directly opposite to the attitude taken to the movement for the independence of the Armenian enclave of Nagorno Karabakh, in Azerbaijan. There, the West is arguing against the claim of the Karabakhis and demanding that the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan be respected. My suggestion to Serbia is that it immediately discover oil under its lands.

ANDREW KEVORKIAN
London W1

Sir: If by "the logo of the Millennium Experience" Robin Allington (Letter, 11 June) means that skinny woman with an Australian war boomerang over her head and her hand about to clutch a lethal Chinese throwing star then I should think that for £140,000, the designer could have thrown in a machine-gun.

LEN CLARKE
Uxbridge, Middlesex
Sir: As the primary cause of tooth decay is sugar, is it not more appropriate to add fluoride to sugar rather than salt ("A pinch of fluoride in Scottish salt", 8 June)?

GRAHAM E BELL
St Andrews, Fife

LETTERS SPECIAL

THE INDEPENDENT REDESIGN

Sir: Have you any idea what turmoil you have caused in my daily life? First, you publish Network on a Monday, which means writing to my son and daughter-in-law, to send it on to them, on a Monday instead of a Tuesday.

Today (9 June), chaos followed turmoil, for both me and my neighbours. So wrapped up was I in reading my *Independent* that I lost track of time. This led my friendly neighbour to be so concerned because I had neither pulled back my curtains nor taken in the milk by 9.40am that he knocked on my door to see if I was still alive.

How will I fit in my day's work of letter-writing, consultation paper responses, minute writing for voluntary organisations and attendance at public meetings if you intend to continue to produce a paper that is so physically easy to read that I will study it all. I can even read the adverts!

BETTY PERRY
Chelmsford, Essex

Sir: Hurray, hurray! You have got rid of my *bête noire*, the tabloid sections, which were such an eyesore. The presentation now is traditional, although the design is in the modern style. It makes your newspaper a joy to read. No need to buy *The Times*!

PATRICK ROWE
London N1

Sir: I have previously been delighted by redesigns of *The Independent*. However, the new offering is something of a backward step. The new font gives a "heavy" feel to the paper, with a significant reduction in white space. Heavy divider lines between some columns are also overdone.

However, the quality of writing and writers has remained, it's just a little harder to read!

ROY GODDARD
Southampton

Sir: At first glance the new typefaces give *The*

Independent a look very similar to the *Telegraph*. As one of the reasons I buy this paper is that it is not the *Telegraph*, I hope this is where such comparisons will begin and end, although I dare say you would quite like their sales.

MICHAEL CRYAN
Newcastle upon Tyne

Sir: Overall, your revamp appears excellent and far superior to the former model. However, I would suggest that the format of the third page of the review section has been copied from the *Leeds Student Newspaper's* Comment pages. The position of the cartoon directly mirrors its situation in ours. I wonder if as well as pitching your newspaper in direct competition to *The Times* and *The Guardian* you are attempting to steal our readers too.

CLARE LISTER
Deputy Editor
Leeds Student Newspaper
Leeds

Sir: Church appointments? Changing of the Guard? Did I pick up the *Telegraph* by mistake? Ah no; here's a terrible graphic on the Pandora column! It must *The Independent*.

Another month, another redesign (quite nice, though). How long will this one last?

KEITH BRAINTHAITE
London SE13

Sir: When I read the paper today (9 June), I had the same feeling as when I opened your paper for the first time in 1986. You must have done something right! The broadsheet format of the second section a definite plus.

MARK TAYLOR
London EC1

Sir: We enjoyed the added extra puzzle of devising the grid to fit yesterdays (9 June) Concise Crossword clues. It made a nice extension to coffee break. However, coffee break would have run into lunchtime had we tried to devise both the clues and the

answers to fit the grid that you published. We think, today, you printed the wrong correction and it should have been the grid not the clues and answers. Perhaps you could print another correction.

JOHN FRITH
MARY FRITH
JO FRITH
Teddington, Middlesex

Sir: It really annoys me each time *The Independent's* layout is revamped because you should be spending more of your efforts to get the actual printing process perfected, rather than altering the fonts regularly. My copies are always marred by serious vertical creases on the inside pages. I have written to you before about this but the problem still remains and means some columns are unreadable at times.

PETER STODDARD
Fareham, Hampshire

Independent, both in content and in presentation. All that is required now is for it to famously become the first newspaper to famously stop saying "famous" when "well-known" is meant.

Dr DAVID ZUCK
London N12

Sir: I think your new look is fabulous, but I have one small criticism: "Foreign News" sounds mildly xenophobic - can you not call it "World News", or "International News" instead?

LESLIE BROWNE
London SW1

Sir: What a wonderful surprise to open, and to delve into, today's (9 June) issue of the paper. Most hearty congratulations are due to all who have brought this rebuilt paper to fruition. I am most thankful to have stayed with *The Independent* through the bad days, not without misgivings at times.

But that is water under the bridge. My most profound

hope is that this development can be kept going. A certain tycoon won't like it. The problem is going to be to find the time to do justice to it!

L A MOIGNARD
Leyburn, North Yorkshire

Sir: Congratulations on the new design. It conveys an impression of a newspaper that is packed with informative, solid journalism. None of your rivals has divided their content between two sections as sensibly. I also like the new features such as Monitor and Historical Notes, and the expanded space for obituaries is a real treat. After drifting through all the broadsheets in recent years, it has been some time since I felt so comfortable with my daily paper.

PAUL BREWER
London SE27

Sir: I don't know if anybody thought about the consequences of making the review section broadsheet size. It is now almost

impossible to read while travelling on public transport in London. Opening a broadsheet newspaper while on the Tube invariably involves punching somebody in the face or suffocating them with a face full of newspaper.

The review section used to be quite a pleasant read. Now for some reason all the grimmest sections of the paper - obituaries, editorial comment etc - seem to be sitting beside articles on the arts and living.

There must be a better way to attract new readers than by going all Victorian.

NICK DARLOW
London SW11

Sir: You have returned *The Independent*, to being a newspaper instead of a lifestyle rag.

It seems that going back to basics does not always end in failure! Thank you for giving me back a paper I have read since issue two!

ADAM GRAY
London SW6

THE INDEPENDENT

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هَذَا مِنْ الْأَصْلِ

Mr Blair sets a trap for Mr Ashdown

THIS WEEK'S Joint Constitutional Declaration by Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown is a mixture of high rhetoric and low cunning. On the face of it, it merely restates the programme of changes to the way Britain is governed on which Labour and the Liberal Democrats agree. But the real significance is that, in showing that the programme will take more than one parliamentary term to achieve, the two parties will be bound to each other, however loosely, at the time of the next election.

Mr Ashdown is the clear loser in such an arrangement. Like so many others without his self-proclaimed shrewdness, he has had his wings caught on Mr Blair's silken threads. Newspaper editors, proprietors and columnists, however previously hostile to the Labour Party, have been lured into the spider's web. Even if they oppose the European Union and are apologetic about issues such as the impending reduction in the age of consent for gay men, they find Mr Blair engaging, go-ahead and sincere. It is the same with business leaders, controllers of the commanding heights of the economy. Today's peerage for Sir Colin Marshall is a case in point. They may hate trade unions, the minimum wage and the Social Chapter, but they think Mr Blair is straight, understands their concerns, and is in some sense "one of us".

And so it is with Mr Ashdown, entangled in his own pieties about consensus politics and ending the yaboo culture of Westminster. Those are pieties which we have espoused at *The Independent*, too. We favour politicians working together where there is common ground, and do not believe in opposition for the sake of it. But, equally, pluralism and choice are important values in a healthy democracy. Mr Ashdown claims to be providing "constructive opposition" to the Government, and he has opposed New Labour policy quite sharply on occasions. He claims, when attacked by critics within his own party, that his membership of a Cabinet committee - which produced the rather pompously titled "declaration" - is purely about working together on policies where the parties just happen to agree. But the overall impression given by the Lib Dem leader is of being on best behaviour on account of the two carrots dangled before him: one is the prospect of Mr Blair backing electoral reform in the promised referendum; the other is the possibility of gaining a Cabinet post for himself.

Mr Ashdown has been well and truly trapped by the Prime Minister. So far, the Mr Blair has not budged from his position that he is "not persuaded" by the case for proportional representation. That leaves him free to propose his own form of change to the voting system: allowing electors to use numbers to rank candidates in order of preference - the so-called alternative vote. This would certainly be in the interests of the Lib Dems, but it would not be a "proportional" system.

Much will depend on the attitude of Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, who is charged with coming up with a "broadly proportional" system to be put to the people in a referendum. But Mr Ashdown should recognise that, like so many others, Roy Jenkins has already suc-



cumbed - rushed, even - to the New Labour embrace. It was the Jenkins notion of the "Conservative Century" which the Prime Minister adopted to lend a sheen of credibility to his Lab-Lib web. He has talked about Labour and the Lib Dems as "adjacent" parties. Mr Blair claims the Tories won so many elections in the 20th century because the "radical", left-centre forces were divided between the Liberals and their successors, and the Labour Party. It is an attractive notion, but unfortunately it does not bear much relation to the

facts. In the 1950s, for example, the Liberals were a pathetic rump and the Tories still won every election.

Mr Ashdown should stop his hydra-headed approach to politics - one day Mr Blair's best friend and a potential foreign secretary, the next his most vociferous left wing critic - and concentrate on setting out a truly liberal alternative to the authoritarian and centralising tendencies of this government. He might not get a seat in the Cabinet, but he would at least add something to the democratic process.

Hanging out the flags of St George

PUBS, OFFICE blocks, cars, even green fields: suddenly, everywhere, there is a flag. The World Cup has caused them to sprout across the country. But it is the slightly unfamiliar red and white of St George that has blossomed. If, of course, these were symbols of a deep-seated national pride, they might be a welcome sight. Visit any hick town in America and you will see the Stars and Stripes flying from even the most unprepossessing of buildings, from garages to rubbish dumps. One of the most endearing features of American life is the ingrained belief that anyone lucky enough to be an American has already won the lottery of life, and this leads to a pride in the flag at which we can only wonder.

But the flags that have sprung up this week have nothing to do with national pride and everything to do with that aggressive nationalism, bordering on xenophobia, so familiar to anyone who has been to an international football match. Before the World Cup started, Lord Wakeham warned newspapers to avoid what he called the excesses of Euro 96. But it is the newspapers which followed popular sentiment rather than the other way round. The flag waving is a product of this.

The power of flags lies in their shorthand. Sadly, the flag of St George needs only to be glimpsed to act as a reminder of English hooligans rampaging through the streets. In Australia - as in Ulster - the flag itself is a matter of burning debate: as the country debates republicanism, raising the current union jack-based flag is a political statement. The Israeli flag, with the Star of David, has an emotional pull for most Jews. And in South Africa, one of the most immediate statements that there was a new broom was the replacement of the old national flag, with all its apartheid associations, with the new multicoloured one.

The World Cup, however, is just a festival of football. It is not a rewriting of von Clausewitz's description of war as the continuation of politics by other means. So hang out the flags, by all means, but let us hope they are not accompanied by a nasty wave of xenophobia.

Irrelevant honours

IT'S THAT time of the year again. Yes, honours are more often than not an award for toadying or a reward for past behaviour. Welcome to the peerage, Lord Marshall. Yes, they are a perk of some jobs. Arise, Sir John Birt. And yes, they can come in very useful as a bargaining tool. Hello, Lord Burns.

But this time round there is at least a welcome lack of political time servers, the Prime Minister having done away with political honours. The absence of some thoroughly objectionable honours, however, is hardly a defence of a system which is utterly irrelevant to the modern world. Apparently, the Prime Minister is considering replacing the various Empire awards (Order, Member and Companion) with Commonwealth titles - hardly the most radical of reforms.

Still, they do no real harm, and they add to the gaiety of the nation. Who, after all, could object to Sir Geoff Hurst? Keep your fingers crossed, Mr Shearer: if things go well, come 12 July, it could be Sir Alan.

John Humphrys came by chopper, so why did I just get a train ticket?

BY NEWPORT station we sat down and gritted our teeth. Midday had come and gone with no sign of the train. My two-year-old son was threatening to jump on to the tracks in search of Thomas the Tank Engine, my wife was convinced (after years of bitter experience) that I had misunderstood the timetable and I was starting to break into a cold sweat.

We were bound for a literary festival at which I was due to read and answer questions. I pictured a marquee full of patient, earnest faces awaiting my arrival, waiting and waiting until patience gave way to rage. Urged on by my wife, I approached a pale youth wearing the uniform of the railway company. "Do you know how late it's going to be?" I asked. "I am supposed to be giving a reading at the Hay Festival in a couple of hours."

The youth shook his head and simply said: "What?" Again I questioned: "The train. Even a rough idea how late?" He looked at me with what I took to be pity and replied: "Ah no. I wouldn't like to say sir." I tried several of his colleagues with an equal lack of success. Then a woman sitting nearby said she was also on her way to Hay. "You'll make it alright. Don't worry," she said.

As it happened I had returned just the previous day from a three-week trip to Japan

filming a *Great Railway Journey*. In three weeks, and across countless miles of track, not one train had been late. Steam trains, commuter trains, bullet trains. All had arrived and departed exactly as scheduled. And on the one occasion when a train threatened to be late, the apology was fulsome. In this matter at least the Japanese know how to say sorry. When our train rumbled into Newport 25 minutes late, was there a word of apology? Of course not.

By the time we neared Hay-on-Wye, the family stress level was heading for the danger zone. But much, much worse was to come. For, as we began the last stage of the journey from Hereford to Hay by car, our charming driver Nigel volunteered a terrible secret: "We had that John Humphrys from the *Today* programme earlier," he chirped. "They sent a helicopter up to London to get him." A helicopter? From London? While I, the inestimably great Keane was travelling by rail (second class). I was just recovering from the shock of that disclosure when Nigel explained that several other writers not quite in the helicopter class - like Peter Carey - had been chauffeured down from London.

So it was, somewhere between Hereford and Hay-on-Wye, amid the green folds of the summer countryside, that I



FERGAL KEANE

I came face to face with a reality I have evaded for too long. I am not an A-list celeb - at the very best I am C-list

came face-to-face with a reality I have evaded for too long: I am not an A-list literary celeb, not even a B-list one. At the very best I am C-list. Perhaps even that is pushing it. If I were a soccer team, I would be lucky to be in the Fourth Division. If I were a country, I would be Albania or Guinea Bissau.

I was, however, naturally concerned to hear that the arrival of Mr Humphrys' helicopter had terrified a number of cows. They had been innocently munching grass when the whirlybird descended into their field. The creatures must indeed have suffered shock.

One can only hope that the trauma was alleviated by the knowledge that a real somebody from the A-list had arrived in their midst.

If, like me, you have produced a book inspired by the arrival of your firstborn, it might seem perfectly natural, even desirable, to bring the said child to an occasional literary event. At the very least, one would be preparing him for a life on the giddy fringes of celebrity. After Hay, it is something I would strongly caution against.

For it is a scientific certainty that the child will become more waspish, fractious and cross a greater number of adoring readers who surround him. "Is this the famous Daniel?" they asked and he frowned in return. And woe betide the one who extended a hand to pat his head. This could produce howls of terror.

At Hay, we went to a charming restaurant on the main street for our evening meal. A woman sat alone by the window. To her right was an open book, to her left a glass of white wine. She was contemplating the rooftops and the last beams of sunlight flooding the street. As we approached, she looked up and smiled. "That little boy looks like one of Botticelli's cherubs, a real sweetie," she gushed. Ten minutes later, as our cherub loudly demanded a football and stamped his feet on the ground, I saw her shoulder

muscles tense, a distinct red flush appearing on her cheeks. The poor woman was struggling. At the best of times, it is impossible to control the moods of a two-year-old. Generations of parents have suffered public humiliation at the hands of such infants.

But where other parents at a literary festival might deliver a stern reprimand, I must deliver a public sweetie that demands immense powers of self-control. No barking, no raised voice. "Now love, won't you be a good boy?" I whimper. If things are looking desperate I might say: "If you're not good, the man will be cross." Just who the man might be is never specified, but his looming presence generally tends to have a quietening effect. And thus, as I ushered the fractious child out of the restaurant and into the street, I imagined the other diners saying: "Such a nice man, just like the book."

The reading itself was a dream: full of ordinary people listening carefully and asking intelligent questions. I always come away from such events feeling slightly guilty. People are, generally speaking, terribly nice. The media swamp I crawl from is so shallow, self-regarding and venal. I love Hunter S Thompson's description: "It is a shallow money trench, a long plastic hallway where pimps and thieves run wild and good men die like

dogs." There is, however, the occasional heard of the lurking crank. I once almost abandoned a reading in Ireland when a supporter of the Angolan government launched a long and bitter tirade against imperialism and its proverbial running dogs. He included me among the galloping canines.

Still worse are the religious fanatics. Believe me, they are out there. Waiting for their moment. You never know the hour when you will look up from a table full of unsold books to find a beaustic smile and an invitation to welcome Jesus into your life. Hay-on-Wye was blissfully free of such miseries.

After the reading, I collected Daniel from the patient arms of his mother and headed off across the fields. The sun was shining and my son was in his "I am the sweetest child in the world" mood. After a few minutes walking, we came to a field full of sheep. The ground was covered with their tiny black droppings.

"Don't walk on the poo," I warned. "Don't walk on the poo," repeated Daniel. Then he fixed the sheep with a determined stare. "Let's chase them," he shouted and galloped off across the poo-pebbled grass, scattering the flocks before him.

● Fergal Keane's book *Letter from Daniel* is published by Penguin/BBC, at £6.99.

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MONITOR

THE NEWS OF THE WORLD

Kosovo • Genetically Modified Food • The World Cup • Texas Killing • The Rolling Stones • Ulrika Jonsson

KOSOVO

Reactions to the escalating tensions between Serbs and ethnic Albanians

DIE WELT
Germany

It is vital that NATO demonstrates to the president of the Republic of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic, that his military actions against the civil population in Kosovo are no longer appropriate. If Milosevic is still unmoved, NATO has to increase its potential threat. At the moment, it is difficult to judge what support the moderate powers of the population, keen for autonomy, still have. Therefore, it is questionable whether the Kosovo conflict can be solved with only a few measures. It is more likely that NATO will be brought into action, which would be a lengthy and difficult operation. Is this really what is wanted?

SALON MAGAZINE
Internet

Ever since Milosevic's crackdown in Kosovo began three months ago, the West has responded with hand-wringing meetings by NATO foreign ministers, the six-nation Balkan "Contact Group" (Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the United States), the European Union in Luxembourg, the White House and the National Security Council. The upshot of those meetings has been a mantra-like recitation of demands for Milosevic to desist and get down to talking to Kosovo's civilian leaders, or face possible military wrath.

SYDNEY MORNING
HERALD
Australia

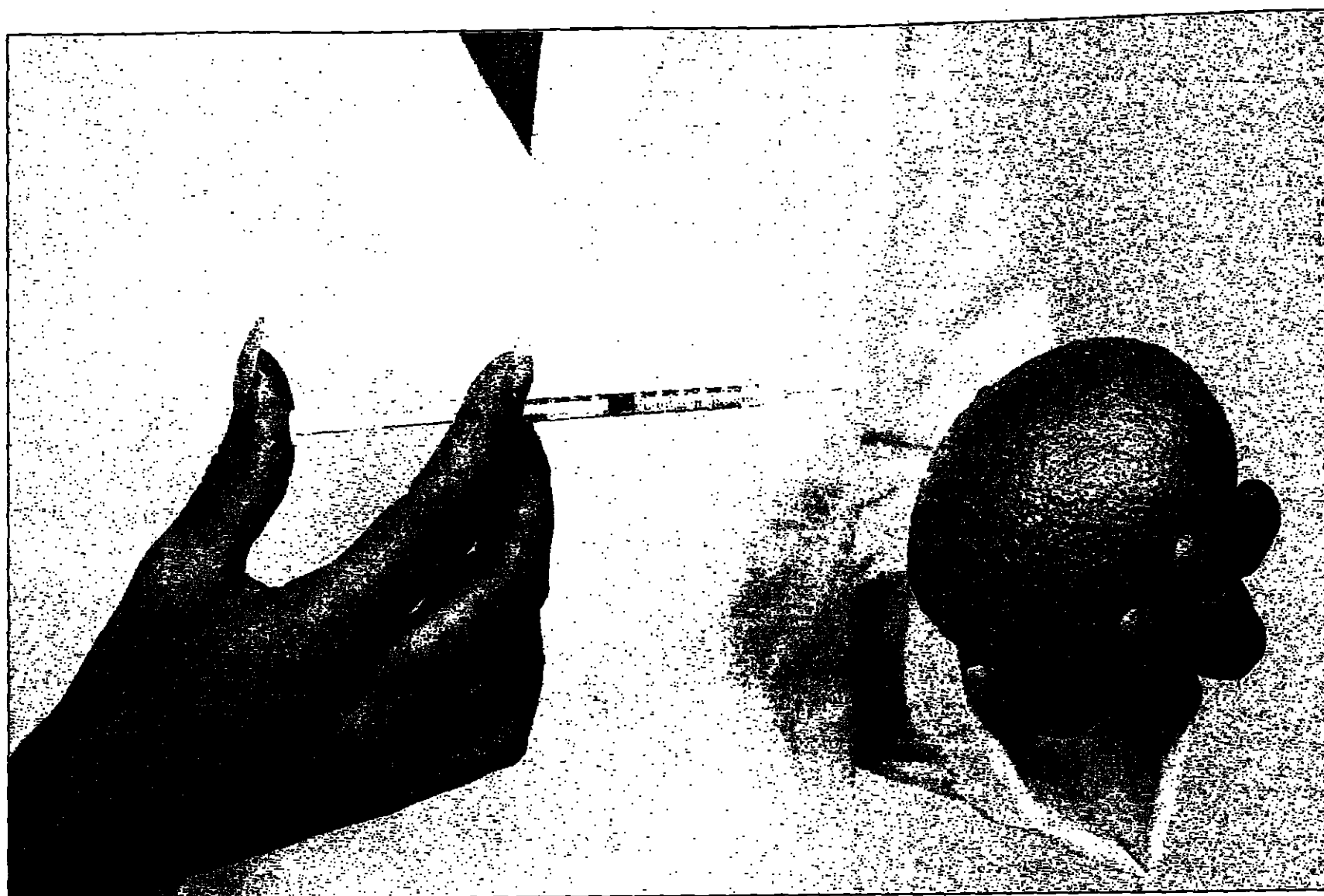
The bloodshed must be stopped, the violence contained, and a demonstration be made that there are standards of civilised behaviour everyone must observe. But care must be taken not to play into Mr Milosevic's hands. Kosovo is not (yet) a case of Bosnia revisited. The response from the international community, and NATO in particular, must reflect this. Military action against Serbia eventually may be required but not before all other efforts are exhausted to isolate Mr Milosevic and reverse his latest folly.

WASHINGTON POST
USA

Klaus Naumann, head of NATO's military committee, said the studies concluded that well-executed air strikes could end the conflict, if a political decision is made to intervene. "If we were assigned the task of enforcing an end to the fighting we could ensure that goal with air strikes, just as we did in Bosnia."

THE ECONOMIST
UK

Slobodan Milosevic, perhaps the most incompetent nationalist in modern history, continues to hack away at what is left of Yugoslavia. This is horribly familiar. Familiar, too, is the dilemma faced by western leaders: should they watch the bloodshed, as they did for too long in Bosnia, or risk compatriots' lives and their own political careers by getting involved in somebody else's war, as America did in Vietnam.



You are what you eat – a scary thought

GENETICS & FOOD

A call for caution over genetically modified food by The Prince of Wales – and the responses

PRINCE CHARLES,
THE DAILY
TELEGRAPH

I personally have no wish to eat anything produced by genetic modification, nor do I knowingly offer this sort of produce to my family or guests. There is

increasing evidence that a great many people feel the same way. But if this is becoming a widely held view, we cannot put our principles into practice until there is effective segregation of genetically modified products, backed by a comprehensive labelling scheme based on progress through the food chain.

THE ECONOMIST

Genetically modified crops have great potential to improve

plant and human health. If the first product on the market had been a nutritionally enhanced rice rather than a high-tech tomato, consumer response might now be very different. Today's debate offers scientists another chance to engage the public and assuage their fears. For the future of bio-technology, these are seeds worth sowing.

NEW STATESMAN

I favour both nuclear and genetic technologies. I find it

difficult to see how the western developed world will sustain its standard of living into the next millennium and avoid a runaway greenhouse effect without recourse to the energy that is locked up inside the atomic nucleus. Similarly, there are more than 4,000 single gene defects known to afflict humanity. Many of them result in diseases that inflict terrible suffering, usually upon children but also upon parents who have to live with the knowledge that the genetic constitution they passed on to their child was responsible. There is now real hope that in

many instances this burden of human suffering may be alleviated.

MALCOLM WALKER
OF ICELAND
STORES, THE SUN

I have banned genetically modified soya from our own-label products sold in all 770 Iceland stores and will only use suppliers who know exactly where their soya comes from, because to me it is the most worrying problem in the food industry we are likely to face.



TEXAN LYNCHING

The murder of James Byrd, who was beaten, then chained to a car and dragged to his death

LOS ANGELES
TIMES
USA

We are told these are "isolated incidents" despite the fact that there have been copycat killings of black men in America for at least 110 years. And yes, there is a name for them: lynchings. About this our society is in determined denial. Even to use the word "lynching" is to risk

being accused of the worst kind of demagoguery. The fact is that unlike school-shootings, lynching is a well-understood American social phenomenon. There is a deep social understanding not only of what lynching is, but of how it is done ... part of our collective American unconscious.

DALLAS MORNING
POST
USA

How do you quantify the generalised – and historically justifiable – unease that many black Americans feel when driving down lonely country highways? Or

when a police cruiser tails their car even though they're obeying the speed limit? The constant trickle of racially motivated horrors – the Jasper murder, the police officer and West African immigrant killed by a skinhead in Denver last year, the Rodney King beating – stokes anxiety and distrust. To root out hatred, we must all teach tolerance, not once in a while, but every day.

EL PAIS
Spain

The phenomenon of racial hatred is worldwide, but it certainly seems to be most prevalent in this country of macabre ends. In his celebrated monologue in

Memphis, on the eve of his murder, Martin Luther King said that one day justice and racial harmony would come to the United States. The disturbing facts of the Jasper county lynching distance his dream again.

DAILY MAIL
UK

The truth is that America has tried to sweep its deep racial problems under a carpet of political correctness and positive discrimination. No, James Byrd's death is not an aberration. It is part of a trend that is casting a dark shadow over America.

ULRIKA JONSSON

Following the attack on the TV presenter by her (now ex) boyfriend, footballer Stan Collymore.

DAILY MAIL

She's already appeared drunk on stage once, and behaviour that can appear funny and outrageous at 25 can appear sluggish and rather disgusting at 35. Her salvation, she says, lies with her son, who she adores, though she has a full-time nanny looking after him. He is, she says, the centre of her life. And yet on the eve of the World Cup she'd rather

be in a bar pinching men's bottoms that reading him a bedtime story.

THE SUN

WHAT is the matter with footballers? Soccer thug Stan Collymore smacks Ulrika Jonsson and has to be pulled off her in a bar. What a lout. What an appalling example he sets to fans. Behaviour like that is intolerable.

DAILY STAR

Ulrika has shocked pals with her capacity for booze – she's even been known to carry around a hip-flask full of Scotch.

MISCELLANEOUS

SYDNEY MORNING
HERALD
Australia

A culture of sexual intimidation and harassment exists at the Australian Defence Academy because a flawed concept of discipline is applied. Instead of discipline, group loyalty and obedience is inculcated in first-year cadets largely through the tyranny of senior cadets. Loyalty becomes a case of not "jacking" (informing) on mates and not "crossing the road" (complaining to superiors). Under a forced code of silence based on a perverse loyalty code, seniors abuse their juniors and males harass and assault females. This is not discipline, but a gross caricature of it.

COPENHAGEN POST
Denmark

An erotic sex pressure group has threatened to hijack this year's summer solstice festivities by staging a Bible-burning stunt. The main organiser of the sex trade fair "Erotic World", Kenneth Strandby, has pledged to set alight over 10,000 Bibles. "The Bible represents nothing good. It's a 2,000-year-old lie, and the Church and the Bible are to blame for almost all things evil."

BUSINESS WEEK
USA

The sacred Japanese rite of Sumo which dates back 1,500 years is fighting its toughest opponent: Japan's economic slump. The drop in attendance which began a year ago is a grim omen for the more than \$100 million-a-year sport. Yen-pinching customers are less willing to fork out over \$15 for seats near the stadium's rafters. And companies are terminating expensive box-seat reservations and sponsorships.

RESEARCH BY SEAN O'GRADY
AND SALLY CHATTERTON

Football, a metaphor for war

THE WORLD CUP

The beginning of the world's most popular sporting event

HERALD TRIBUNE
France

For good or not so good, football mobilises people, admits their participation in rejoicing or disappointment, introduces excitement and suspense in their various lives. It is something in which all who choose can share. They have other differences, but this is a meeting of hopes. Vive le foot!

LIBERATION
France

Cheered on by a chauvinist crowd and crushed by its brutal supporters, each team symbolises what is most intolerant about each nation. Football becomes a metaphor for war, a pedagogy of hatred. Each football war is fought according

to strict rules: on what battlefield could a referee interrupt and send off those who are fighting dirty? After which war would the vanquished battalion accept defeat and promise to do better next time? Perhaps football is a metaphor. Or rather, perhaps it is a state of law in which the man in black regulates conflicts and tames instincts.

THE EXPRESS
UK

The World Cup has become a football tournament for people who don't actually like football ... But once the fanfare is over and the new fans have stopped wittering on about Glenn Hoddle's puritanism robbing England of their one true star, once the epicentre of football has shifted from bourgeois France where the wine is fine, the food is fabulous and the footballers spout poetry, to Bradford or Burnley where it isn't, and they don't know many of these fans will still be around? If you think you've recently caught football fever try

going to watch Leyton Orient on a damp drizzly day. It's amazing how quickly your temperature can drop.

TIME
USA

(Advice to Scottish fans.) "... just remember one thing: Despite what Del-boy says, Bonjour does not mean goodbye."

THE ROLLING STONES

Reaction to the band's decision to postpone its British tour because of changes in tax law

THE MIRROR

TONY Blair's favourite record is the Rolling Stones' *Beggars Banquet*. He might like to reconsider. The band's members

are far from being beggars yet have shown that they care only for themselves.

Between them they have amassed a £350m fortune. Yet still they cancel their British concerts to avoid tax.

The fault lies entirely with the selfishness and greed of the Stones. If they never appeared on stage again, or sold another record, they would still live in luxury for the rest of their lives.

Instead they have decided to let down the fans who have provided their fabulous wealth. One of the songs on Mr Blair's favourite

album is *Sympathy For The Devil*. There will be no sympathy for the Rolling Stones after this.

THE TIMES

When Tony Blair was no more than an Ugly Rumour, there was nothing he wanted more than to be Mick Jagger. Now it is Jagger who wants to swap places.

While Jagger might prefer a soirée at Buckingham Palace, and the chance to swap tips on tax minimisation with the monarch, Mr Blair would until now have loved to have the Stones round for a jam. But, as either man could now say to the other: you can't always get what you want.

DAILY RECORD

If this were merely an argument about four old rockers and their money, then of course the verdict would be obvious – The Stones simply ought to pay up, and play on. But their showdown with the taxman has wider implications. It finally dispels the myth that rock'n'roll is a bohemian art which somehow remains aloof from the mundane questions of how to earn cash and how to hold on to it.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"The packet of biscuits I opened for my elevenses this morning was wrapped up in more layers than a pensioner going out in the snow" – Playwright and commentator Keith Waterhouse

"Being blonde means never saying anything you don't understand unless you want to be predictable" – TV personality Mariella Frostrup

"Gardening is the new rock 'n' roll. When I was little, it was all fuddy-duddy Percy Thrower. Now it's very social and very, very fashionable" – Ex-supermodel Ali Ward, who has switched careers to become a model gardener

"I would rather be round and jolly than thin and cross" – Shadow Health Secretary Ann Widdecombe, talking about her "enormous" appetite.

"Apparently God is a Europhile" – Former Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer, Norman Lamont

كلنا من الأصل

Living in the past, my friend? Of course we are

I HAVE an American friend called Howard. Not the least of his attractions as a friend is his name. Howard.

It's a voluptuous experience using your own name to someone else, employing it in the second rather than the first person. Not I Howard but you Howard. Et tu Howard. It is vaguely like making love to yourself, but without any of the usual complications. After an evening saying Howard to Howard, I am neither blind nor more than usually hairy of hand.

All this is incidental to my subject, which has more to do with Howard's being American than with Howard being Howard. Being an American, Howard is frequently given to complain that this country lives in the past. Because he is

called Howard I don't tell him that in that case he ought to go back to his own. I don't care to see any Howard suffering a rudeness. But I do explain to him that he has put his finger on the reason everyone wants to live here - because the past is not just another country but a better country.

"This is a medium size-country of middling significance," Howard says. "So what are you doing here?" I ask him. Which still isn't the same as saying go back to New York, New York then.

"I'm only here," Howard says, "because of my Zen Buddhism." I have him now. "In other words you've made a spiritual choice."

"Well, no one would live here for material reasons." Oh yes, I have him now alright. "Precisely," I say.

I can't claim that I know for certain why everyone wants to be here at the moment, why you can't get a taxi after 10pm in either Manchester or London, why Parisian intellectuals would rather drink coffee in Soho than on the Left Bank, why you hear Russian being spoken on the streets of Shoreditch, or why everyone watching *Lolita* at your local Virgin cinema is Spanish, but I'm sure it doesn't have anything to do with the minister for sub-culture, Chris Smith.

Cool Britannia isn't it at all. Except in the sense that "cool" is a pretty old-fashioned concept as hip concepts go, and old-fashionedness - Howard's "living in the past" - is the key to it.

I'm not talking about heritage



HOWARD JACOBSON

and nostalgia now, those other blotchy pages in Mr Smith's portfolio. No. Forget pageantry and Buckingham Palace and the tragedy of poor bewildered Di.

That's just scratching at the surface. The old fangledness that brings people flocking to Britain in their millions has more to do with what we look like, what we sound like, the language we employ.

What we look like, if we are to be honest about ourselves, is a tribe of troglodytes. Even standing outside Emporio Armani with our mobile phones, we look as though we've just come up from the mud. Have you seen the Rolling Stones recently? They resemble human bogwort. I mean that as a compliment. For doesn't that look correspond to what we do best in art - caricature and the grotesque?

Shakespeare may be our greatest writer but he is so various he cannot truly be said to quinte-

sentiaise us. Even with his Latinisms, Ben Jonson is somehow more English. As is Dickens. They more fully plumb the savage comedy which is innate to us, to our intelligence, to the lineaments of our faces, and to our language. The violence of our satire, our hurricane sense of the ridiculous, make it impossible for us ever wholly to embrace anything, least of all the new. Because we love the grotesque - because we are the grotesque - we are not glib.

Our more lyrical European brothers seem to grasp instinctively that they are better off here. Not necessarily better off as to personal finances but better off as to tense. Americans grasp the same. The fact that Howard chooses to use the word "spiritual" to de-

nominate his English existence is the proof that he's dissatisfied with the materialism of tomorrow.

The reason the young of the planet are congregating here is that the young are more attracted to the magnetic pull of ancient mud than anyone.

Living in the past, Howard? Of course we're living in the past. Look about you. Kids with rings through their noses. Kids in shackles and fetters. Kids snorting alkaloids extracted from the coca plant. Kids gathering in dark, unventilated places and jiggling up and down to a monotonous and unsubtle beat. I've heard it said that it looks like the end of the world out there. To me it looks like the beginning. The way we were.

Labour's peerless performer

SATURDAY PROFILE BARONESS SYMONS

THIS MORNING, Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean, having returned last night from a ministerial trip to Vancouver, Seattle and Los Angeles, is on her way to Cardiff to put the final touches to preparations for the European Council, which opens on Monday and marks the climax of Britain's six-month presidency of the EU.

The 47-year-old Foreign Office minister, accused with cautious precision last week by the Shadow Foreign Secretary Michael Howard of having "on the face of it, misled the House of Lords", was months ago personally put in charge by Tony Blair of the projection, protocol and stylistic detail of the international summits Britain has hosted in the first half of the year. It is a small but significant sign of the trust the Prime Minister places in her, a mere Parliamentary Under Secretary. It also suggests that it may take a lot more than the poorly-handled Sandline affair to dislodge her.

For now, however, the *schadenfreude* that has attended her presence in the eye of the Arms to Africa storm is given all the more piquancy by the fact she used to be, as one of the more quoted union leaders in Britain, a valiant defender of civil servants against Tory ministers who, as she once put it, were "quick to take the credit and slow to take the blame". And since it was the evidence of Sir John Kerr, the Foreign Office Permanent Secretary, that she had been given information about the Customs investigation into Sandline which she didn't pass on to her fellow peers, it looks as though she could yet be felled by one of those very mandarins she used so zealously to represent. What, in short, could be a better story line - and who a better star - for a first-class Whitehall soap opera?

Or so it seems. Much of the publicity Liz Symons has attracted this week has fostered the image of a Chanel-clad, politically weightless New Labour princess, who has

moved relentlessly upwards thanks to a heady mixture of accident of birth, skilful networking and undoubted sexual magnetism. The reality is a lot more interesting.

It's true that Elizabeth Conway Jenkins was born into the mandarin, in that her father Ernest was a fiercely bright, chess-playing mercator who rose from being an assistant tax inspector to become Director General of the Board of Inland Revenue. But any idea that she jumped on to the Labour bandwagon just at the right moment is wide of the mark.

She has been a party member for 20 years or more. James Callaghan, who began his working life as a tax officer, knew her father well. Her mother, a Welsh miner's daughter, was a friend through London Welsh circles of George Thomas, the MP for Tonypandy who became Commons Speaker. She went to Putney High School where she overlapped with Virginia Bottomley.

She took a first in history at Gorton and signed up to do a graduate dissertation on 14th century Sussex before deciding she had been at university long enough and joining the civil service as a fast-track administrative trainee. As a civil servant, she worked for the last Labour government in the Department of the Environment on the controversial Community Land Bill. But then, in 1977, she made a surprising career change and joined (just as the young James Callaghan had done 40 years earlier) the Inland Revenue Staff Federation as an assistant secretary, negotiating the pay and conditions of trade union members in the Revenue.

She became a union star, and not just because she was a flash of glamour amid the sober suits of the tax-collecting classes. The burden of

sustaining the bruising civil pay dispute which preoccupied the Thatcher government for five months in 1981, fell especially on tax offices, and she was dispatched to one of the main centres, Shipley in Yorkshire, to run the strike round the clock. She handled local press and television with flair, but she spent more time on the more mundane and vital tasks of organising picket rotas and handling hardship cases.

Then in 1989, having risen to be the IRS's deputy general secretary, she was invited to take on the job of general secretary of the First Division Association. The FDA was, to put it mildly, an unusual trade union. Its members were the brightest and the best of the civil service. A majority of Permanent Secretaries, then as now, were members. And above all it was a potential player in the business its members were in.

Symons saw to it that the FDA played that role as none of her predecessors had quite done. She first set energetically about the task of improving the pay and conditions of her members. But then she began to respond to growing worries about the perceived threat to their political neutrality posed by the Thatcher style of government.

The FDA's general secretary became a convenient unofficial channel for the concerns of some of Whitehall's most important practitioners. It produced its own code of ethics as a first step towards the statutory rewriting of civil service rights to neutrality. According to Peter Hennessy, Professor of Contemporary History at London's Queen Mary and Westfield College, Symons fan, and the country's leading Whitehall watcher, she and Giles Radice, then the chairman of the Public Administration Commons Select Committee, ushered in

what amounted to "an important change in the British constitution. This was very much hers. She was effective and convincing".

In retrospect her championship of political neutrality was made, says Hennessy, a little more awkward by her acceptance of a Labour peerage from Tony Blair in 1996. But she immediately gave her notice in at the FDA and prepared to become a backbench peer. Without any promise of a ministerial job.

She also made what turned out to be important party connections in her period in the FDA. Jonathan Powell, now Blair's Chief of Staff, held office in the Diplomatic Service Association, the FDA's Foreign Office arm. Peter Mandelson became one of two backbench advisers to the FDA between 1993 and 1994 - extending his own range of senior civil service contacts in the process.

And Philip Bassett, the distinguished labour and industrial journalist, and Symons' partner of 17 years, now playing a key strategy and communications role at No 10, had developed a close friendship with Blair during his period as employment spokesman.

But none of this had much to do with Symons' rapidly rising profile. At a time when television producers were crying out for articulate, presentable women to join male-dominated panels, she was a natural as a liberal, moderate-minded critic of the Tory government. She became a *Question Time* regular.

Her home life - she and Bassett have one son, James - rather undermines the image of the ruthless professional on the make. In January 1992, Bassett was diagnosed as having leukemia. It was an appalling time for both of them. For months, Symons visited him three times a day in hospital, juggling job, child and what Bassett believes was her utterly indispensable role in nursing him to recovery. He has since told friends that, medical care notwithstanding, he simply does



Baroness Symons is widely admired for her skill, intelligence, integrity and style

Nicola Kurtz

not believe he would be alive today if it wasn't for her.

Nowadays, they entertain handsomely at their mansion flat in the shadow of Westminster Cathedral and in their small weekend cottage near Hungerford. Symons is an accomplished cook and keen gardener with catholic reading tastes from historical biography to PG Wodehouse.

None of these pleasures come quite so easy, however, now she is a minister. At the Foreign Office she has been a doer. Having established that no minister had ever met the families of the nurses imprisoned in Saudi Arabia, she promptly

did so. Whatever the rights and wrongs of her turf war with Clare Short, it was she, as the Foreign Office minister responsible for the Caribbean, who first went to Montserrat. She was formidable, according to fellow ministers, at trying to secure some money for relief.

One of the problems of being a Foreign Office minister in the Lords is the daunting brief of being required to speak and answer questions on the entire range of business.

For all modern ministers, the volume of paper and the speed with which it arrives is huge. For a junior spokesman in the Lords, it is cor-

respondingly worse. Despite this, Symons is widely regarded as having been, in Peter Hennessy's own words, "a very good Foreign Office minister". No unqualified fan, to put it mildly, of New Labour, Hennessy says: "I hope she survives. She is a good and intelligent woman who has fallen among the flighty and heavily spun."

The current enquiry will have to reach its own conclusions, but Hennessy adds: "My very powerful instinct is that she is just not the sort of person who would deliberately set out to mislead parliament."

DONALD MACINTYRE

The English women's novel, killed by feminism

SATURDAY ESSAY BY ELAINE SHOWALTER

THE DEATH of Catherine Cookson signals the culmination and passing of a great tradition of the English women's novel. Twenty years ago, when I published *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Leavis*, feminist literary criticism was in its infancy and research on women writers was hard work.

Books were out of print, and there were few substantial biographies, collections of letters or catalogues of women's manuscripts, let alone theories of women's writing. Trudging through libraries in 1972-73 in search of women writers' archives, I was often the first scholar to read a harrowing journal or open a box of letters.

Rummaging in the dusty stacks of the Fawcett Library, in London, I made friends with other hardy pioneers. We were accustomed to being mocked for working on women - my male adviser called my thesis "strident militant feminism". But we were inspired, too, by the goal Virginia Woolf articulated in *A Room of One's Own*: that, if we were willing to labour for women, Shakespeare's sister would be born again and be able to fulfil her genius.

As a young academic, I often doubted myself. But I never doubted that British women

writers had a history worth recording. And stories such as Cookson's survival of illegitimacy, alcoholism, poverty, lack of education and illness to become one of the century's best-selling novelists sustained my faith in Woolf's ideals.

But now, at the end of the 20th century, as I finish a revised edition of *A Literature of Their Own*, Woolf's vision of Shakespeare's sister, the feminist literary messiah, no longer seems important. The study of women's writing no longer depends on winning critical laurels of genius for the few, but rather on the acceptance of the female tradition as part of the culture as a whole.

There can be no doubt that acceptance has arrived: on the Internet I can find hundreds of sources for research on women's writing; bookshops overflow with texts; the Orange Prize, which I helped judge this spring, provides materials for teaching contemporary women's fiction; and a lottery grant will soon create a National Library of Women based on the Fawcett Library Collection.

Of course, there is mockery still: A Gill's puerile sniping at the new library in last week's *Sunday Times* is a reminder that the days of mindless crit-

ical dandyism are never over. But, on the whole, feminist literary criticism and British women's writing has never been so flourishing.

But, paradoxically, British women's writing at the millennium may also be coming to the end of its history as a separate "literature of their own". First, two decades of critical attention to women's writing has inevitably interfered with imaginative ecology and altered the evolution of the tradition.

Postmodern women writers' awareness of belonging to a literary tradition has made their fiction self-reflexive and parodic in a new way. Just as the heroine of a New Woman novel in the 1890s was likely to be an artist or writer, the heroine of a New British Woman novel in the 1990s is likely to be a feminist literary critic.

Joan Smith's detective, Loretta Lawson, is writing a feminist study of Edith Wharton; Fay Weldon's *Big Women* is about the women who run a feminist publishing house called Medusa; and A S Byatt's elegant Maud Bailey, in the 1990 Booker Prize-winning *Possession*, teaches women's literature at "Lincoln University".



Catherine Cookson, the culmination of a great tradition

Byatt dedicated *Possession* to her friend, Isobel Armstrong, professor of English at Birkbeck College and a distinguished scholar and critic of Victorian women's poetry. An academic herself, Byatt has so thoroughly absorbed feminist critical history that she invents a whole canon of it in a brilliant literary *tour de force*.

Not only does she create a pantheon of remarkable Victorian women poets and writers - and compose all their poetry, letters, stories and journals - she also imagines, reproduces and satirises the feminist literary criticism written about them by British, American and French female academics.

Possession is explicitly about the battle for ownership of British literature between English and American scholars, traditional and feminist critics. But it is implicitly a statement

that Byatt's imaginative possession of her literary heritage makes criticism superfluous, redundant and absurd. When fiction so anticipates and exceeds criticism, we have come to the end of an era.

Moreover, the insularity of setting and the consistency of style that made English women's fiction so homogeneous as a topic 25 years ago has been radically transformed. The British women's novels I considered in 1977 showed virtually no awareness of American literature and very little European influence. But the women's novels I read for the Orange Prize this spring were set all over the world and reflected the international stylistic influences that come with a global culture.

With contemporary mobility and the popularity of travel writing, British women writers, including Marina Warner, Pauline Melville, Hilary Mantel and Jenni Diski, have abandoned Austen's two little inches of ivory for an international canvas ranging from the Middle East to the Caribbean.

Angela Carter's influence on British women's writing was pivotal in this opening and

transformation, and 1979, the year Carter published *The Sadeian Woman* and *The Bloody Chamber* and Thatcher became prime minister, was the historical turning point.

Carter's familiarity with and enthusiasm for Japanese popular culture, American movies, Latin-American magical realism, French surrealism, perverse sexuality and carnivalesque masquerade marked a new turn. Since her death in 1992, the British women's novel is as likely to be set in decadent Carter Country as the decorous *Home Counties*.

Following Carter's investigation of Sade, women's novels in the 1990s explore the roles of sadist and masochist, cross-dresser and fetishist, that have increasingly obsessed contemporary culture.

Like Carter, women writers use postmodern technique as a shield to enter the subterranean, freakish, and dangerous spaces of the modern city. For novelists such as Helen Dunmore, Lucy Ellmann, Sarah Dunant, Helen Zahavi, Yvonne Roberts, Sally Beaman and Maureen Freely, there is full access to every language, style and subject.

Finally, women's fiction is no longer about uniquely women's subjects. In fact,

British women writers have forged female mythologies and transcended them. On one side, Michele Roberts's *Impossible Souls* creates a fabulous hagiography of women writers; on the other, Pat Barker's *Regeneration* trilogy merges history and imagination to explore men's lives in the Great War.

Moreover, the boundaries between women's popular commercial fiction and high culture are less rigid. Mystery writers such as FD James and Ruth Rendell are among the most honoured contemporary writers, while Cookson's sagas will be as important to literary scholars of the 21st century as Margaret Oliphant's novels are to Victorian scholars today.

Cookson was a great benefactor of feminist education. She gave £100,000 to St Hilda's College, Oxford, for the study of science and donated £50,000 for a women's studies archive at Girton College, Cambridge. "I wish to encourage environments in which women can flourish as students and scholars," she wrote. If British women novelists have moved into the mainstream, Cookson deserves some of the credit, and the posthumous millennial publication of her 100th novel will be a fitting symbol of the fulfilment of a feminist dream.

Hammond Innes

LIKE JOHNNY Appleseed, the legendary American frontiersman, Hammond Innes had a kindly obsession for planting trees - acres of trees, forests of trees; in places as far apart as Suffolk, Wales, Canada and Australia - perhaps as some kind of atonement for all the quantities of timber cut down and processed into the hundreds of thousands of copies of his best-selling adventure novels.

And perhaps not, for Innes was "green" decades before the notion was at all sexy, although he did not view, or write about, the environment sentimentally. During the 1950s, sickened by the long-drawn-out death agonies of whales not quite killed by defective grenade-harpoons, he championed the idea of electrical harpoons to ensure instantaneous death: both British and Norwegian money was poured into the project but in the end the technical problems proved insurmountable.

This was characteristic of Innes; he was ever a practical man - at the time whale-hunting was an economic necessity - yet with a strong humane streak in his make-up. He was also, as he once admitted, intoxicated by the sheer thrill of the chase, the careering dash through mountainous waves and the pitting of the whalers' wits against a leviathan that might weigh as much

lifting him out of the general ruck of thriller writers, establishing him as a writer that serious critics (such as Elizabeth Bowen and J.W. Lambert) took seriously.

Ralph Hammond Innes was born in Horsham, Sussex, in 1913 and educated at Cranbrook School, Kent. Leaving at the age of 18 he odd-jobbed during the early Depression years, successively in publishing, teaching and finally journalism, in 1934 joining the staff of the old *Financial News* under Brendan Bracken. In 1936, poorly paid and needing money to get married, he hanged out a supernatural thriller and sent it to an agent in Fleet Street. The agent, who normally only handled articles and short stories for syndication, managed to sell the manuscript to Herbert Jenkins, a publisher whose chief asset was B.G. Wodehouse but who also issued light romances, cheap thrillers and westerns for the less exalted circulating libraries.

To his horror, Innes discovered he had been tied down to a four-book contract, with the distinctly ungenerous advance of only £30 per book (at the time £45-plus was the norm for a non-literary novel) and a two-year deadline, which turned what had started out as a quick way of raising the wind into fearsome drudgery. Even so the four thrillers he produced - *The Doppelgänger* and *Air Disaster* (both 1937), *Sabotage Broadcast* (1938) and *All Roads Lead To Friday* (1939) - are certainly no worse than most actioners churned out by those publishers (such as Jenkins, Stanley Paul, Melrose, Skeffington or Hurst & Blackett) who specialised in providing high-octane thrills dashed off in low-octane prose.

Indeed, in some ways they are rather more interesting. Innes (then an ardent socialist) managed to infiltrate into his plots a mildly subversive anti-establishment undercurrent unusual in genre fiction of the period, when the status quo was rarely questioned. In later years, however, he disowned them - not because of his political stance (his politics were always leftist), and "not because", as he later explained to the writer Peter Tremayne, "they are particularly bad, but because mixed in with the main body of my work they would look a bit ham-fisted". None of them ever earned much more than their initial advances, although, as Innes pointed out, "I couldn't really complain, because writing those four books I more or less taught myself how to do it".

That this was true was proved when, with some relief, he changed his publisher in 1939, moving to Collins, and proceeded to write three more thrillers which were markedly superior to the Jenkins



Innes: a compulsive traveller, a true been-and-seen-and-gone-and-done writer, never at ease unless he had experienced his backgrounds for himself

In the field of adventure writing he was the nonpareil

as 90 or 100 tons, and still drag the dead weight of a small whaler through the water, venting blood in scarlet plumes as it died.

Innes himself had experienced in full the "thrill of the chase", as well as its attendant dangers. In 1947, researching for his *The Blue Ice* (1948), he lived with Norwegian whalers on the islands off Bergen, on occasion hunting with them, often in the dirtiest weather, with a full gale blowing and ploughing through what the whalers themselves referred to shruggingly as "choppy seas" (in reality, waves as high as the mast-tip). His gruelling experiences, as well as a stint on the flensing decks of the factory-ships where he helped out the meat out of the dead giants, were later put to even better use in his epic novel of survival in the vast Antarctic icefields, *The White South* (1949; a Book Society Choice and filmed in 1954 as *Hell Below Zero*, with Alan Ladd and Stanley Baker), the book that was instrumental in

books - although a better contract and a healthier advance cannot have hindered the creative process.

Innes was a compulsive traveller. His third book for Collins, *Attack Alarm* (1941), was written on a gun-site after he had joined the Royal Artillery; the manuscript of his fourth, *Dead and Alike* (1946), emerged with him when he was demobbed (rank, Major), just after completing an arduous skiing course in the Italian Dolomites ("Stiffer than any army course I was ever on, including battle training") which he later utilised as background for his sixth, *The Lonely Sloop* (1947), a superbly constructed and atmospheric thriller which first alerted both critics and public that here was a writer to watch.

He was also a compulsive traveller - a true been-and-seen-and-gone writer, never at ease unless he had experienced for himself his backgrounds, honing his prose on the whetstone of reality. For *Madon's Rock* (1948) he crewed on a

friend's yacht in the Fastnet Race; he hitched a lift with the RAF into blockaded Berlin at the height of the airlift for *Air Bridge* (1951); and around the same time he was in San Sebastiano when Vesuvius erupted and lava rolled over the village; the result was *The Angry Mountain* (1950).

In the early 1950s he began a long and profitable association with the prestigious American travel magazine *Holiday*, whose editors virtually bankrolled his world-wide odysseys - although after 1956 the question of finance hardly arose. In that year he published *The Mary Deane*, which at a stroke launched him into that rarefied empyrean most writers yearn for though few attain, superstardom. This apparently simply tale of conspiracy and fraud on the high seas is transformed into an epic drama through Innes's consummate handling of the forces of nature. His talent for vivifying landscapes (the bleaker, the more hostile the better), natural phenomena,

the weather (usually at its most implacable) had been readily apparent in the books he had published since the end of the Second World War, but in *The Mary Deane* his art reached a peak of virtuosity. His narrative skills, his unerring sense of pace, his vivid and enthralling descriptions of overwhelming natural forces all combine into a magnificent story of high adventure and suspense.

The hugely successful 1959 film of the book, *The Wreck of the "Mary Deane"*, starring Gary Cooper at his craggiest, was a bonus which enabled Innes to buy his own 42ft ocean racer, not unnaturally named *Mary Deane*, in which, invariably accompanied by his ex-actress wife (soul mate would not be too cloying a term), Dorothy, he sailed around the coasts of Europe and Asia Minor in search of stories for over 15 years, each year made up of six months travelling, six months writing. Most of these travels were later spell-bindingly logged up in *Harvest of*

Journeys (1960) and *Sea and Islands* (1967).

Innes's intense love of the ocean naturally provoked a keen awareness of the environment, and the perils, mainly of human origin, facing it. His novels became increasingly propagandist, at times verging on the expository, though his narrative drive was never buried beneath a mass of accusatory statistics, sheer anger at man's folly and greed in any case bringing them alive.

When, in his late sixties, he gave up sailing, tree-planting took over as the passion of his life, particularly the planting of Sitka spruce, a fast-growing softwood - *High Stand* (1965) was his "tree" novel, just as *The Big Footprints* (1977) had been his "elephant" novel and *The Black Tide* (1982) his "oil" novel. Planting trees tended to keep at bay an ever-threatening pessimism about the future of the planet, and the future of man. He felt a need to return to, not precisely the simple life but a life

more in tune with the natural forces he could describe so well. "As we have become more technological," he once said, "we have lost a lot. There were things those early people understood that we don't."

During his life he was constantly hailed as "a storyteller of the old school", which usually denotes a lumpen style, marked authoritarian attitudes and the sensitivity of a concrete block. Such was never the case with Hammond Innes, a man who wrote absorbing and exciting books and expressed in them, and in his own way of living, a genuinely life-enhancing philosophy. In his own field he was, as his fellow adventure writer Duncan Kyle admirably remarked, the nonpareil.

Jack Adrian

Ralph Hammond Innes, writer: born Horsham, Sussex 15 July 1913; CBE 1978; married 1937 Dorothy Lang (died 1989); died Kersey, Suffolk 10 June 1998.

E. H. H. Archibald

THE 4,000 oil paintings in the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, include more portraits than any other English collection except the National Portrait Gallery, with which there was long an active collusion on who had claims on what. "Wearing my National Portrait Gallery hat," said the NPG trustee Viscount Stanhope of an unusual Cromwellian item, "I say that should go to Greenwich" - where Stanhope was at the same time the NMM's first chairman of trustees (1934-59). Such a tale: witty, well-observed and usually true - though not always exact - was the style of history purveyed by E. H. H. Archibald, who was for over 30 years the curator of that enormous oils collection, and oversaw acquisition of nearly a quarter of it.

What the exact topic was, so long as it appealed to him, did not matter: marine art, portraits, rare books, glass and ceramics, arms and armour, flags, costume and manners, ships, cars, aircraft, the history of the Royal Navy and "its traditional enemies, the French", that of the museum itself, dogs (he bred Afghanis), plants, exotic birds and fish.

All were subjects on which he had something to say which you might not hear from anyone else, or at least

not in the same conversation and in his way, knowing but unpatronising, fresh however often told, and punctuated by his peculiar ticks. "Quite!" and "Don't y' know?" were interjections of urbane astonishment or mild disbelief; a long "yes" expressed sardonic doubt, its depth in direct ratio to the length of the period. "Do you think this picture is by or after Bleggs, Mr Archibald?" "Well... yerrrrrrs (heavy pause) But a long way after, don't y' know?"

Teddy Archibald was born in Belfast in 1927, elder son of a well-off and widely connected Protestant family in the linen finishing business. His father, Walter, was a young stretcher-bearer on the British side during the Easter Rising (bringing in James Connolly, later executed, who gave him his gloves) and also fought in France as an officer in the Dublin Fusiliers. Both he and Archibald's mother, who survives him, were busy, social and sporting people, and his happy early years included a devoted nanny and, in his teens, an uncle from whom he learnt about collecting 18th-century glass.

He became a keen sailor and later a risk-taking athlete whose exploits included surviving the Cressa Run practically unharmed on both the luge and in a dangerously im-

promptu bobsleigh crew: they crashed. An early idea of joining the Navy led him to an English prep school before, rather unusually for his background, he went to Stowe, then recently established and under the charismatic headmastership of J.F. Roxburgh, whom he adored. He made many friends there - recollecting a "shared hatred of organised team games" with his classmate George Melly, "an amusing, eccentric boy" - before going to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1945 to read History, though not seriously enough to get more than a modest degree.

He however exercised a keen eye, his rooms filled with friends and with 17th-century portraits, glass, rare books and armour bought at very low prices. At Sotheby's sale of the Stead Collection in 1948 he put up his hand at £3 for a tray of chain mail, got it at £2, and came away with one of the best 15th-century hauberk out of public captivity. This he twice wore to all-night dances, observing how light it was, though for a man ever bigger than his handsome six feet.

In 1951, after three years in the family firm, Archibald was "bowled over" by the Greenwich collections, while in London for an unsuccessful Colonial Service interview. He corresponded with the NMM director,

Frank Carr, and - with 127 others - applied for a post in the picture department under Michael Robinson.

He joined in May 1952, his British interests complementing Robinson's in the Dutch school. Between then and his retirement in 1984 he became the anchor of the museum's expertise in oils, who they were by, what they showed, and was a mine of advice to anyone with a genuine interest: in the 1950s and 1960s when the museum had significant private funds and prices were low he was sometimes able to acquire 50 a year.

"Leggatt's rang in 1956 to ask if we were interested in an early portrait of Captain Keppel by Reynolds: 'Would £150 be too much?' I said, 'No.' It was fairly typical. 'How about £500 for the two?' he asked a Welsh jobbing dealer who had cheaply bought five large canvases from the Cardiff Coal Exchange in 1968, thus securing a superb W.L. Wyllie of the bombardment of Alexandria (1882) and a 13th Charles Dixon of the surrendered German High Seas Fleet entering Rosyth.

Other things were more recalcitrant, from identifying the hand of Isaac Sailmaker, to reattributing many of the Palmer Collection of early Dutch pictures (acquired with a special Treasury grant in 1963).

In 1961 HMSO published his *Preliminary Descriptive Catalogue* of the NMM portraits and the following year he organised a then pioneering and stylish "mixed media" exhibition on "Passengers by Sea". He wrote the accompanying booklet, and also organised in 1964 the only exhibition ever devoted to the artist-voyager John Everett, whose work was willed to the museum.

However, his main publishing successes were where knowledgeable enthusiasm rather than scholarly reference could predominate. Though now sniped at by more thorough (less engaging) specialists, his two specially illustrated books on *The Wooden Fighting Ship in the Royal Navy* (1968) and *The Metal Fighting Ship* (1970) sold 80,000 copies in all and it would have been 90,000 had he not refused to allow a cheap edition. His *Dictionary of Sea Painters* (1980) will reappear later this year in a third, enlarged edition and, though lacking rigour, is likely to remain a standard source.

His writing was partly based on a world trip round galleries and museums which he took as unpaid leave in 1976 when it was clear he was going to end his career as it began, simply as Curator of Oil Paintings. For by then times had changed. Archibald

fitted well into the "gentleman's club" of Frank Carr's regime but less and less into what followed.

From 1967 the museum became a bigger and more complex organisation, with wider interests and increasingly unsympathetic for a connoisseur of fixed views (many reactionary) and little truck with the deference and flexibility that other brands of authority required. The historical catalogue of NMM paintings that he completed was not in a form suitable for publication by the early 1980s and he was sidelined, perhaps inevitably but to its detriment, in the computer-based work which led to the published *Concise Catalogue of NMM oils* in 1986.

By then he had taken early retirement and, though he acted as a private consultant, wrote some informative recollections and continued to live close to the museum, his last years were ones of increasing loneliness and depression, springing from unresolved conflicts in his nature and worsened by heavy drinking. It was difficult to help him because, in the periods he seemed on top of things, he refused to acknowledge that anything was wrong.

Generous and honourable man as he was, with a great gift for friendship with all sorts, Teddy Archibald's



isolation also drove him into some associations in which his kindness was much abused. It became hard to foresee a better end than the one he met when his iron constitution finally gave up, after several weeks well cared for in hospital. His last known words, spoken from sleep, were characteristic: "But who's it by?" (as of a picture) and the name of the last of his much-loved collies.

Pieter van der Merwe

Edward Hunter Holmes Archibald, museum curator and writer: born Belfast 24 January 1927; Curator of Oil Paintings, National Maritime Museum 1952-84; died London 27 May 1998.

Professor Dietrich Goldschmidt



DIETRICH GOLDSCHMIDT, as much as anyone, was the voice of conscience in a post-war Germany trying to come to terms with its past. As a devout Christian of the "Confessing Church" involved with Pastor Martin Niemöller and Helmut Gollwitzer, he became a leader in Aktion Sühnezeichen (the "Repentance Action Committee") which to this day tries to atone for the sins of the Nazi period and served as a mediating voice between Church and university.

Last February, the Technical Uni-

versity in Berlin awarded him an honorary doctorate to add to the many distinctions he had achieved in the course of a remarkable life. Between 1933 and 1939, Goldschmidt had taken a degree at the TU in engineering and factory design. As a "half-Jew" he was only permitted to be a factory worker and from 1944 to 1945 was condemned to do slave labour in a work-camp.

After the Second World War, he studied at the University of Göttingen, where he also taught. Goldschmidt made major contributions

in the fields of education and sociology, describing himself as a "sociologically orientated generalist" as his work embraced more and more areas. In 1956 he became a professor at the Pedagogic University in Berlin and then, from 1963 until 1982, served as one of the directors of the Max Planck Research Institute. In 1966, the West German government appointed him to the Deutsche Bildungsrat dealing with reforms within the German education system.

His concern with Third World issues took him to many countries. At

the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania he established its Engineering Faculty. In the United States, he became part of a commission studying current educational structures. His life's desire seemed fulfilled when he was offered a visiting professorship at Stanford University, but he felt that his departure would leave Aktion Sühnezeichen and his peace work without leadership.

Goldschmidt was a leader in the dialogue between Christians and Jews, particularly through his work with the Working Group of Christians

and Jews at the Kirchentag which meets every two years at a Protestant assembly bringing together almost 200,000 participants.

His many books include *Technology in Developing Lands* (1960); *The University as an Institution: present problems and future trends* (1983); *Between Ethic and Mass Education* (1963); *Unter der Last des Holocausts* ("Under the Burden of the Holocaust", 1989); and a biographical study of Rabbi Robert Raphael Geis (1984).

Many of the German notices of his

death mention Goldschmidt's private initiative in helping a village of old and suffering Jews in Drohobycz in Ukraine and asked that it be supported in his memory. Even in death, he endures as a voice of conscience.

Albert H. Friedlander

Dietrich Goldschmidt, educator and political activist: born Freiburg, Germany 4 December 1914; Professor, Pedagogic University, Berlin 1956-82; Director, Max Planck Research Institute 1963-82; died Berlin 20 May 1998.

Josephine Hutchinson

IN ALFRED Hitchcock's superb thriller *North by Northwest*, a chilling moment occurs when the hero, Cary Grant, having taken the police to the mansion where he has been held captive, is confronted with an outwardly charming, handsome woman who professes to be the respectable wife of a senator and, with a benign tolerance all the more chilling for its surface kindness, confesses that Grant had too much to drink at the previous night's party. Josephine Hutchinson, who makes this brief role so effective, had decades earlier been a leading theatrical player, a film star at Warners, and a celebrated dramatic coach. She also had a total of three husbands and a legendary lesbian affair.

Hutchinson was born in Seattle, Washington, in 1898 (although some sources claim 1904). Her mother was the actress Leona Roberts, best remembered for her portrayal of Mrs Meade, the doctor's wife, in *Gone with the Wind*. Through her mother's acquaintance with Douglas Fairbanks Sr, the petite, Titian-haired girl was given a small role in *The Little Princess* (1917) starring Mary Pickford, after which she studied drama and dance in Seattle for three years, making her stage debut as a dancer at the city's Metropolitan Theatre in *The Little Mermaid* in 1920. For two years she worked with the Rams Head Playhouse Company in Washington, run by Robert Bell, the son of Alexander Graham Bell, and in 1924 she and Bell were married. The following year she made her Broadway debut with an acclaimed performance in *A Man's Man* opposite Pat O'Brien.

Gladys Calhoun, designer for Eva Le Gallienne's Civic Repertory Theatre, saw Hutchinson in the play and, when Le Gallienne fired Rose Hobart from the role of Ima in *Three Sisters*, Calhoun recommended Hutchinson. "She is beautiful, direct and possessed of emotional reserve," wrote one critic of her performance. Le Gallienne's troupe, considered the nearest thing to a permanent repertory theatre that America has had, presented low-price classics, and nurtured some of America's finest talent.

Hutchinson played in *Ibsen*, *Chekhov* and *Shakespeare* as well as an acclaimed Wendy opposite Le Gallienne's Peter Pan (1928). *The Herald Tribune* recorded: "Josephine Hutchinson gave to Wendy the right sense of budding motherliness that the part demanded." "It was the best training that could happen," said Hutchinson. "Often we would be rehearsing six or seven plays in one week... Le Gallienne was my teacher in both love and work." Hutchinson had led a protected life until her marriage, usually in the company of her mother (who also joined Le Gallienne's troupe). "It's quite natural for actors to fall in love with the people they work with," she said later, and she and Le Gallienne entered an affair. "It was good and normal and healthy," she stated. "There was never any sense of shame connected with our relationship."

She and Bell remained good friends,

and in 1930 he allowed her to divorce him on fictional grounds of extreme cruelty, though the *Daily News* headlined, "Bell divorces actress, Eva Le Gallienne's shadow." Hutchinson moved in to Le Gallienne's apartment and made headlines again in 1930 when a water heater exploded when being lit, igniting Le Gallienne's dress. Hutchinson and a maid beat out the flames, both receiving bad burns. Le Gallienne's hands remained badly scarred.

The following year Hutchinson won rave reviews for her performance as Alice in a delightful Le Gallienne production of *Alice in Wonderland* with Le Gallienne as the White Queen and Burgess Meredith as a duck on roller skates. In 1934, her relationship with Le Gallienne faltering, Hutchinson asked the agent Leland Hayward (whose associate, James F. Townsend, she married in 1935) if he could arrange a screen test for her. At Warners, she tested with the final scene from *A Doll's House* (her Nora had already been lauded on stage) and was signed to a lucrative contract.

Her film debut, the musical *Happy-ness Ahead* (1934) with Dick Powell, was not auspicious. As a rich girl posing as

'It's quite natural for actors to fall in love with the people they work with,' she said

a poor one after falling in love with a window cleaner, the actress, perhaps realising that she was too old for the role, smiled a lot with desperate coquettishness in possibly the worst performance of her career. She was fine as a woman who falls in love with the brother of her invalid husband in *The Right to Live* (1935), based on Somerset Maugham's *The Sacred Flame*, and superb as the supportive wife of an oil company executive with divided loyalties in *Oil for the Lamps of China* (1935), memorably pleading with her husband's company that they keep him employed, but neither film did well commercially.

She gave another fine performance as a caring wife in *The Story of Louis Pasteur* (1936), prompting the studio to announce that Hutchinson would star in a biography of Marie Curie, but instead they gave her *I Married a Doctor* (1936) - Sinclair Lewis's *Main Street* with a happy ending unconvincingly added) and Michael Curtiz's sombre *Mountain Justice* (1937), based on a real-life tale of a girl from the backwoods of Virginia who killed her brutal religiously fanatical father and was nearly lynched.

Hutchinson's assignments had not allowed her to develop a strong following, and in 1937 Warners let her go. Freelancing, she did a lot of radio work (she had a beautifully modulated voice),



Hutchinson in *Mountain Justice*, 1937

Kobal Collection

playing opposite Clark Gable in a 1937 broadcast of *A Farewell to Arms*, and more films including, at Universal, one of the very best of her horror cycle, Rowland V. Lee's *Son of Frankenstein* (1939), in which she played Elsa Von Frankenstein to Basil Rathbone's baron. "The director had a theory that dialogue learned at a moment's notice would be delivered more naturally. For actors like Basil, Binky (Lionel Atwill) and myself trained in theatre technique, this is not true." The film started a lifelong friendship between the actress and Boris Karloff, who was playing the Monster for the last time in his career.

As the wife who dies leaving her son to be spoiled by his father in *My Son, My Son* (1940) and the wife of headmaster Cedric Hardwicke in *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1940), Hutchinson gave assured performances, but her starring days were over and she temporarily gave up performing to become an acting coach at Columbia Studios, her pupils including the contract players Adele Mara and Marguerite Chapman. "I had gone to several drama coaches," said Chapman, "but learned more from Josephine Hutchinson than all the others put together."

Hutchinson returned to films with Joseph Mankiewicz's gripping film noir about an amnesiac *Somebody in the*

Night (1946), followed by a series of mother roles - to Shirley Temple in *Adventure in Baltimore* (1949), Elizabeth Taylor in *Love is Better Than Ever* (1952), Jennifer Jones in *Ruby Gentry* (1952) and Dean Stockwell in *Gum for a Coward* (1957). She was aunt to Tommy Sands in *Sing, Boy, Sing* (1958), and the director Michael Curtiz, noted for remembering his former leading ladies, cast her as the Widow Douglas in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1960). The actress was now concentrating more on television than movies - she was in four Perry Mason stories and was featured in the television movie *The Homecoming - A Christmas Story* (1971), the forerunner to *The Waltons*. *Guns, Smoke, Rain, Sleet, and Fire*, *Dr Kildare* and *Burke's Law* were other series in which she appeared. She was a mother again - to James Caan - in her last film, *Rabbit, Run* (1970).

In 1972 she married Staats Cosworth, with whom she had acted in the Civic Repertory Theatre 40 years earlier.

Tom Vallance

Josephine Hutchinson, actress: born Seattle, Washington 12 October 1898; married 1924 Robert Bell (marriage dissolved 1930); 1935 James F. Townsend, 1972 Staats Cosworth (deceased); died New York 4 June 1998.

HISTORICAL NOTES

JEAN MOORCROFT WILSON

An uncharacteristic act of vandalism

"If I had the choice of making friends with Tennyson or with Sassoon," wrote Wilfred Owen, shortly after meeting the fox-hunting man at Craiglockhart War Hospital. "I should go to Sassoon." And a month later Owen was describing him as "Keats + Christ + Elijah + my Colonel + my father confessor + Amenophis IV in profile." A clear case of a younger, less established poet's hero-worship for a handsome, successful senior, you might think. But is this stereotype the full truth? While it is undeniable that Sassoon felt superior to Owen in a number of ways when they met - physically, socially, psychologically and as a poet - very few people realise just how snobbish Sassoon's attitude towards Owen was. "He was embarrassing," Sassoon told Stephen Spender when he asked him about Owen. "He had a Grammar School accent."

It is also true that Sassoon had a profound influence on Owen's war poetry, in terms of both subject-matter and technique. Some of the more memorable touches in "Anthem for Doomed Youth", for instance, including its arresting title, were the result of Sassoon's direct suggestions. Under the stimulus of his company Owen drafted more than a dozen poems at Craiglockhart, at least four of which were among his best work. But what is less well known is that Sassoon also benefited from the extraordinary coincidence of their meeting at Craiglockhart. Not only did Owen's comments hearten and help him as he showed Owen work destined for *Counter-Attack and Other Poems*, but Owen's method of approach began gradually to change his own. "To remind people of [war's] realities was still my main purpose," Sassoon wrote in 1918, the summer after his meeting with Owen, "but I now preferred to depict it impersonally and to be as much 'above the battle' as I could. Unconsciously, I was getting nearer to Wilfred Owen's method of approach." And Owen's influence is visible in even more specific terms: Sassoon's "unreturning army that was youth", for example, surely echoes Owen's title "The Unreturning".

The most intriguing discovery I made, however, concerned the two poets' personal relationship. Sassoon's own



Sassoon: attached to Wilfred Owen

letters to Owen, most of which have survived, give us a fair idea of how he felt about the younger man at the time. But Owen's feelings are more difficult to pin down. While Sassoon says little to suggest a romantic attachment, in Owen's few surviving letters to Sassoon there is already enough to fuel speculation about the precise nature of his attachment.

Certainly he was to regard his first meeting with Sassoon as an epoch in his life, even remembering the exact shade of blue dressing-gown Sassoon was wearing, and he was to replay the scene frequently in his head, as lovers do. Another sign of the strength of his emotions is that on the occasion that he spent a whole day with Sassoon, sharing breakfast, lunch, tea and dinner with him, he failed for once to write the usual letter to his dearest mother. But perhaps the most compelling indication that Owen's feelings crossed the borders of contemporary convention is a curious incident which occurred long after his death, when his brother Harold was editing his letters. Though Sassoon had promised to show Harold all Wilfred's letters to him, when Harold arrived at arranged Sassoon changed his mind and subsequently burnt the bulk of them. Harold believed that there was something too intimate in them, which Sassoon wished to conceal. Certainly his uncharacteristic act of vandalism throws a new light on his relationship with Owen.

Jean Moorcroft Wilson is the author of the newly published first biography of Sassoon, *Siegfried Sassoon: the making of a war poet* (Duckworth, £25)

Utilitarianism has no place in the alms trade

ONE OF the few things on which all of the world's major religions agree is that true charity is not only good in itself, it is good for you. The wisdom that has come down to us is that the practical expression of compassion can ennoble both the giver and the given-to. Magnanimity enlarges the spirit.

Yet something appears to have gone wrong. The simple dynamics of the Good Samaritan don't seem to work any more. For one thing, the almsgiver today rarely has any direct encounter with the person he is helping.

The parable of Dives and Lazarus has the poor man sitting at the rich man's gate; but nowadays most of the soliciting is handled by middlemen. Our response to their fund-raising techniques is necessarily a kind of virtual compassion. Victims of hunger or cruelty or disease are presented to us not in person but in carefully chosen images and nicely calculated turns of phrase. We cannot hear them or touch them or speak to them. We will never know them. Indeed, it is not their comfort or healing that our money will pay for, but that of "others like them", who are even less real to us.

Of course, there are beggars on our streets who can meet face to face, but here we are confused. The media tell us they may be bogus - and anyway we know that even the poorest of them is only comparatively so. The absolutely destitute live overseas. Real charity begins abroad.

Clare Short has questioned the way that the media, prompted and assisted by the aid agencies, continue to confront us with pictures of stick-thin children. If their purpose is to provoke us to give more help to the poor, she maintains, they are in the long run defeating themselves: these images only encourage the belief that the people of the Third World are perennial failures and victims, which is not only untrue but damaging to their cause.

She could have said more. The harrowing scenes we are shown both exploit and obstruct our natural emotional reflexes. It is like hearing terrible

screams from the house next door and being asked, "Would you like to help prevent domestic violence?" Of course we say yes, but there is no catharsis in it. Some might say that charitable ends justify such means. So what if it hurts the rich when you pull at their heartstrings? They will survive; the poor may not. But - if the practical outcome is all that matters - compassion that finds no satisfaction in giving is likely to become bitter and mean. Frustration is not good for the heart.

There is a second problem.

The contraction of the world to a global village is overwhelming us with its suffering. When

orally to a hardening of the heart.

There is a third consideration which may seem to contradict the last. The disparity between the rich and the poor is far, far greater now than it has ever been. In the past, the sacrifice the one had to make to relieve the suffering of the other was usually not inconsiderable. Today, by contrast, the differential is so huge that even a small amount of our money can do a great deal of good. Every £10 I can spare, a malshot tells me, could save someone's sight.

How can I refuse? The teeth on the ratchet of charity are set so close together that there is no point at which I can say with a clear conscience, "I have done all I can." Every time I buy myself a CD, I am more or less condemning someone to blindness.

Are the middlemen at fault? Much of their work is impeccable moral, as long as one's morality is utilitarian. They do their utmost to alleviate as much suffering as possible, and to that end extract as much money from us as they can without causing us real distress. If the easiest way to prise open our wallets is to make us feel guilty, they do so; and if we can never put our consciences at rest, that is not their concern. If their efforts to touch our hearts in the end only harden them, they'll find a more shocking image.

But it is not just the material consequences of our giving that matter but the spiritual effects, too, on the rich as well as the poor. And we should not be deceived: however our culture may encourage us to envy our neighbours, almost everyone in the West today is, by objective, historical standards, very rich indeed.

Charity should be more than a joyless burden, made heavier by feelings of impotence, guilt and frustration. This is an issue that agencies that are inspired by something more than utilitarian ethics need to think about. Of course, it will require some expenditure of time, and time costs money. Perhaps they could launch an appeal.

Huw Spanner is Editor of the monthly magazine *Third Way*

GAZETTE

BIRTHDAYS

TODAY: Major Sir Ralph Anstruther, royal equerry, 77; Mr Nicholas Brown MP, 48; Mr David Curry MP, 54; Professor Inga-Stina Ewbank, former Professor of English Literature, Leeds University, 66; Mr Tom King MP, 65; Capt Norman Lloyd-Edwards, Lord-Lieutenant of South Glamorgan, 65; Mr Malcolm McDowell, actor, 55; Sir Peter Marquess, former Director, GCHQ, 71; Mr Michael Melluish, former President of the MCC, 68; Dr Barbara Reynolds, lexicographer, 84; Col Sir John Ruggles-Brise Bt, former Lord-Lieutenant of Essex, 90; Mr Peter Scudamore, jockey, 40; Mrs Mary Whitehouse, founder and President Emerita, National Viewers' and Listeners' Association, 88; Mr Andreas Whitam Smith, founding editor, *The Independent*, 61.

TOMORROW: Sir James Black, pharmacologist, 74; Mr Paul Boateng MP, 47; Dame Florence Cayford, for-

mer GLC councillor, 101; Professor Peter Fowler, archaeologist, 62; Miss Steffi Graf, tennis player, 29; Lady Healey, biographer, 80; Baroness Knight of Collingtree, former MP, 51; Mr David LeRoy-Lewis, former chairman, Henry Ansbacher Holdings, 80; Miss Dorothy McGuire, actress, 79; Mrs Yvonne Moore, chief nursing officer and director of nursing, Department of Health, 57; Sir Gerard Peat, chartered accountant, 78; Mr Jonathan Raban, novelist and travel writer, 56; Miss Kathleen Raine, poet, 90; Dame Rosemary Rye, former president, BMA, 70; Mr Pierre Salinger, politician and journalist, 73; Mr Antony Sher, actor and writer, 49; Mr Nigel Short, chess player, 33; Lord Smith of Clifton, Vice-Chancellor, University of Ulster, 61; Mr Mike Yarwood, entertainer and impressionist, 57.

ANNIVERSARIES

TODAY: Births: Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy,

1396; Catherine ("Skittles") Walters, courtesan, 1838; William Butler Yeats, poet, 1885; Basil Rathbone (Philip St John Basil Rathbone), actor, 1882; Dorothy Leigh Sayers, thriller writer and playwright, 1893; Deaths: Alexander the Great, 323 BC; Benjamin David (Benmy) Goodman, clarinetist and band leader, 1986. On this day: Queen Victoria made her first railway journey (from Slough to Fiddlington in 23 minutes); 1842; Mrs Geraldine Brodrick of Sydney, Australia, gave birth to nonuplets (of whom two boys and four girls survived); 1971: inflation in Britain reached 25 per cent, 1975. Today is the Feast Day of St Anthony of Padua, St Aquilina, St Felicia and St Triphylus. Today is the official birthday of the Queen.

TOMORROW: Births: Harriet Beecher Stowe, novelist, 1811; Burl Ives (Burl Icle Ivanhoe Ives), actor and singer, 1909; Sam Wanamaker (Samuel Watenmaker), actor, director and producer,

1919; Ernesto Guevara de la Serna (Che), Argentinean revolutionary, 1928. Deaths: Edward Fitzgerald, poet and translator of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, 1883; Jerome Klapka Jerome, writer, 1927; Emmeline Pankhurst (née Goulden), women's rights champion, 1928; Gilbert Keith Chesterton, writer, 1938; Maxim Gorky (Alexei Maximovich Peshkov), writer, 1936; John Logie Baird, television pioneer, 1946; Henry (Enrico) Mancini, film music composer, 1924. On this day: Dunkirk, the English and French decisively beat off the Spanish in the Battle of the Dunes, 1658; Henley Regatta was held for the first time, 1839; the world's first motor-race was run in Paris, 1895; the Hawaiian Islands were set up as a Territory of the United States, 1900; the "Black Bottom" dance was introduced in George White's *Scandals* at the Apollo Theatre, New York, 1926; the German army entered and occupied Paris, 1940; a ceasefire was agreed in the

Falklands, 1982. Tomorrow is the Feast Day of St Dogmael, St Methodius the Confessor and Saints Valerius and Rufinus.

LECTURES

TODAY: National Gallery: Jacques-Louis David, "Boating (II): Claude, Seaport with the Embarkation of Saint Ursula", 12pm. Victoria and Albert Museum: Ghislaine Wood, "Sources of Art Nouveau", 2.30pm. Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "Spatial Illusions: Stubbs to Bridget Riley", 1pm. British Museum: George Hart, "The Nubian Temples of Ramesses the Great", 11.30am. National Portrait Gallery: Louise Leates, "George IV as Collector and Patron", 3pm.

TOMORROW: Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "Pop Art: a bonus for abstract artists", 2.30pm.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; 1st Battalion Welsh Guards mounts the

Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, after the Queen's Birthday Parade at 11am, band provided by the Grenadier Guards, Coldstream Guards, Scots Guards, Irish Guards and Welsh Guards. TOMORROW: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am; 1st Battalion The Duke of Wellington's Regiment mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Grenadier Guards.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

TODAY: The Queen takes the salute at the Queen's Birthday Parade at Horse Guards Parade, London SW1; and takes the salute at a fly-past of RAF aircraft from the balcony of Buckingham Palace. The Queen, Mother and The Duke of Kent attend. Prince Edward responds the Hyde Tennis Club at Brid-

port, Dorset. TOMORROW: The Duke of Edinburgh, Patron and Twelfth Man, Lord's Taverners, attends a Patron's versus President's Charity Cricket Match at the Home Park Cricket Ground, preceded by lunch at St George's School, Windsor Castle; and, as Trustee, attends the Prince Philip Trust Fund for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Royal Gala Show at the Theatre Royal, Windsor, Berkshire. Princess Alexandra attends an Art Gankulak Con-

Announcements for *Gazette* BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In memoriam) are charged at £5.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER *Gazette* announcements (notices, functions, forthcoming marriages, marriages), which must be submitted in writing, are charged at £10 a line. VAT extra. Always include a daytime telephone number.

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS/C



John Peel OBE

SPOR

There is an MBE for Alec Stewart, England's new cricket captain. An MBE also goes to John Barnes the former England soccer star. Debbie Bampton, former captain of England's women footballers, get an MBE, and there is an OBE for champion hurdler Sally Gunnell. Kelly Holmes, Britain's 1,500 metre star, is awarded an MBE.

For Linford Christie, Britain's most decorated athlete, there is an OBE to go with his MBE, while World Boxing Council heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis also gets an MBE.

An MBE also goes to Scottish golfer Colin Montgomerie. And Alison Nicholas, winner of the U's Women's Open Golf Championship last year, receives an MBE.

David Holding, a champion sprinter in wheelchair athletics becomes an MBE.

ARTS

Linford Christie OBE (left) and



Barry Norman CBE (left) and

Diplomatic and Overseas

Royal Navy

[illegible]

It is made Companion of Honour,
(right) Ian Holm is knighted

[illegible]

If you can take it, she can dish it out

The minute she walked in the joint, you could she was a woman of distinction. Ed Seckerson spent a little time with Shirley Bassey

LIZA WAS to have opened just across town - same night, bigger venue (coincidence or cosmic rivalry?). But it was Shirley who got to sing "New York, New York". For "ol blue eyes", she insisted, but the subtlety was inescapable... this town was never going to be big enough for the two of us, honey, honey. And so the band struck up "Goldfinger" and Shirley, the indestructible, who never cancels (that clause was written into the Bassey constitution before Liza was out of diapers) shimmered downstage centre, frock and drop (big drop) earrings in full accord with the subtle aesthetics of this her "Diamond Tour".

"Diamonds are Forever", and so is Shirley. The big notes get you first. Mouth and nostrils flare, glossy lips quiver, and out they come. Huge. For a while you don't hear much else. These are the do-not-adjust-your-sets moments. You can't turn Shirley down - don't even think about it. The words come out in spasms, they zap you like tiny electric charges and then flare incomprehensibly into the next big emission. More words go down in the fall-out. You know them anyway - so why should you need to hear them? "Johnny One Note". Caught that. Caught the note, too, took cover from it. And it grew and grew, a little, then a lot of vibrato carrying it through the audience, out of the auditorium, and across town to where Liza was to have performed.

Notes like that scream defiance, and survival. Most of Shirley's songs are about survival. She's her own fortress - iron-clad, or is that spangl-clad.

Speaking of which, there's the body language, the imperious sem-

aphore, spidery hands constantly searching for a place to call home, or else locked around bare shoulders like they belong to someone else. Shirley strikes so much attitude it's amazing there's any left. "I love you, hate you, love you, hate you" ... yes, the emotional colours are primary colours. Preferably black or white. That's the way her adoring fans like it. She's triumphant or she's trembling on the brink of a Niagara of tears. Vulnerable. Vulnerable? "I (Who Have Nothing)" ... please ("Something" was always a more believable title for a Bassey song). Imagine this dame with her nose pressed forlornly against the window panes of "fancy chubs and restaurants" while her lover turns his attentions to someone else? Imagine this dame taking it lying down...

Well, that's another story. Even so, don't mess with Shirley - unless she invites you to. And she does, often. First she sings a song called "Shirley", teasing you with the lyric "Shirley doesn't feel too gay...". Not from where I'm sitting. But then comes "Big Spender", bumping and grinding its relentless way across the front row like burlesque never went out of fashion. Perhaps it didn't. One mature gentleman is invited to fish around in Shirley's fishnets and then gently chastised for doing so. "If you can take it, I can dish it out", she sings. The words are getting clearer now. So is the act. Its appeal has taken in generations of camp followers. In the words of Stephen Sondheim: "First you're another sloe-eyed vamp, then someone's mother, then you're camp...". And then you're an icon. "I'm Still Here" is the name of that song. As



Shirley Bassey, still the most glamorous grandmother in town

Neville Elder

if we hadn't noticed. Shirley's encores start roughly halfway through the time allotted for her entire act. "I'm Still Here" is one. "My Way" is another. "I Am What I Am" is a third. How many more songs about survival can a glamorous grandmother get through at one sitting? How much more triumphalism

can we take? And all the while the floral tributes are piling up on the piano and the cries of "I love you Shirley" or better yet "I love you more!" are proliferating through the auditorium. By the time she has re-emerged like Icarus in tatters, winged and feathered gold lame cape billowing all around her, the

hardcore of her loyal followers have literally gathered at her feet, crouching at the foot of the stage, gazing up, mouthing every word, shaping every emotion. "This is my life", she sings, louder and more defiantly than ever, and the irony of it is that most of her audience know the details better than

she does. She needs to share it, spread it around, like so many favours. As for that elusive final curtain - it's hard to believe there'll ever be one.

Shirley Bassey plays the Royal Festival Hall until Monday 22 June (0171-960 4242).

ARTS DIARY

DAVID LISTER

PERSONALLY, I like football. But there are those who don't, and they might choose to avoid it by going to a concert at the Royal Festival Hall. Tough luck for them.

From next Monday the RFH are relaying World Cup matches on a screen in the foyer, and if any of the matches goes into extra time, the start of the concert will be delayed. The man responsible is the laconic Liverpoolian broadcaster John Peel who is in charge of this year's Melt-down Festival at the Hall.

Peel, needless to say, is very much a football fan. But for those who are not, it will be rather trying to have a half hour delay because Nigeria gets a late equaliser. Trains won't wait; restaurant reservations have to be cancelled; babysitter fees mount up. And why is it only football that receives preferential treatment? Of course, the South Bank Centre management could always start the concerts on time and forget the gimmick.

WHEN IT COMES to gimmicks, though, the South Bank Centre cannot hold a candle to Derek Deane, artistic director of the English National Ballet. Deane received far too much publicity this week for telling his dancers to make love as much as possible before the coming run of Romeo and Juliet at the Royal Albert Hall.

It's not so much that this is a pretty tacky way of selling tickets (though it is). What irks more is that Deane does not seem to appreciate the story he is choreographing.

Romeo and Juliet were not a happy couple with a regular comfortable sexual routine. If Deane really wanted his dancers to become method actors he should have instructed them to dump their current partners, find new loves, pine after them, have all too brief a time together, tell their parents to get lost, ensure that they then lose their new partners in tragic circumstances, and endeavour to have a street brawl on the way. True, the ballerinas would come on stage looking pretty exhausted; but then they probably will anyway if they follow their artistic director's instructions.

THERE IS ONE scandalous aspect to The Rolling Stones' new album (taxi shelter story). It took many of us by surprise to learn in their row with the Treasury this week that Keith Richards pays no tax here at all because he is now an American citizen and indeed lives in the States. Keef an American! When did one of Britain's national treasures cease to be British? Decaying and in need of restoration he may be, but this still looks like yet another careless cultural lapse by the Government. Why wasn't an export stop put on this prime exhibit of post-war popular culture?

TOM STOPPARD took last members of his play *The Real Inspector Hound* out to dinner at the end of a performance at the Comedy Theatre recently. He entered the Italian restaurant and said he had a table booked in the name of Stoppard. The waiter tried several times to pronounce the name. The playwright enunciated it helpfully. Then the waiter beamed and said: "Ah, Stoppard. Of course. As in Dr Miriam." The playwright's face, I am told, was a joy to behold.

Little ado about much Genet's genre-benders

TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY Shakespeare is all the rage. Last week, Cheek by Jowl unveiled their *Much Ado About Nothing*. Now Alan Strachan offers a not dissimilar slant on *Troilus and Cressida*, albeit with a middle-European feel and set a few years later, circa 1910.

Amid signs of anachronistic elegance, the deadlock between the Greeks and Trojans after seven years of siege is seen as much an invitation to bourgeois dissolution as an opportunity to rethink strategy.

You'd hardly know there was a war on. Outside the walls of Troy, Achilles inhales another cigarette while the chinless Ajax tries vainly to pump iron. Within, life and courtship are conducted to the chink of coffee cup and champagne glass and outbreaks of Viennese waltz-music.

In his programme note, Strachan explains that the story of *Troilus and Cressida* has been continually reworked down the ages. That Shakespeare's version is malleable goes without saying - the lovers' vows are self-consciously weighted with a sense of futurity. With the weather as it is, Strachan could probably justify

MUSIC
CELINA GONZALEZ
ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL
LONDON



his concept on the grounds of preserving his cast from hypothermia, but otherwise the relocation seems more of a hindrance than a help.

The setting superficially chimes with the inaction that dominates proceedings, the general slacking off witnessed and lamented by both sides, the sapped morale. Certainly, Cressida's busy-body go-between uncle Pandarus is excellently provided for as a languid dandy (Christopher Godwin) who performs

a sad tap-dance when Troilus finally gives him his marching orders. Even portraying Cassandra, prophet of doom, as a textbook Freudian hysterical seems plausible enough. But, throughout, Strachan allows things to stray perilously close to inertia.

Cheek by Jowl's *Much Ado* works not only because Declan Donnellan compensates for the stiff-upper-lip reading with beautiful choreographed movement, but because Shakespeare is on particularly spiky form. Here, the speeches are frequently ponderous, loaded with simile-addicted rhetoric; a phrase like "the protractive trials of great Jove" doesn't sound like the sort of thing these super-refined souls would burden their weak lungs with.

The self-imposed restraint makes it harder for the outbursts of passion from Robert Hodge's frowning Troilus and Rebecca Johnson's coquettish Cressida to heat the sang-froid atmosphere. A sense that the fortunes of individuals and states hang in the balance is never granted access into this overly polite society. To 3 Sept (0171-486 2431) in rep

DOMINIC CAVENTISH

IT'S NOT unknown for operas to be made into plays, but generally the spoken theatre has enough plots of its own. Opera, on the other hand, has no qualms about plundering theatre's past and present. When the plunder yields Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, or Verdi's *Falstaff*, who can complain? Yet I'm not sure the spoken theatre is the best place for contemporary opera to find its narratives, not least because a quality we might call "operatic" is something so much modern theatre already strives for.

In the programme for his new opera, *The Maids*, the composer John Lunn admits that Jean Genet's play from which his opera derives is "already very operatic" but is wise enough not to exaggerate that quality in his "interpretation". True, the maids of the title are sung by brothers, counter-tenor Christopher Robson (Claire) and tenor Nigel Robson (Solange), but, thanks in part to Olivia Fuchs' libretto as well as to the music's excellent effects, their relationship is rendered less malignant than the ritualised abjection to which Genet

submitted his characters. Or is it that the decorum of opera, specifically new opera, negates the extremity that modern drama seeks?

Not entirely. Fuchs' libretto gives Solange a wonderful line, "My spurt of saliva is my spray of diamonds" and as s/he sings it, we see those diamonds cascading through the air. Is it acting, or is it simply what happens when singers sing? Both, but it wouldn't happen if the line were simply spoken. And the opera swiftly outlines the maids' sad lives. Powerless in their appointed roles, they take it in turns to play Madame, replacing drab serving uniforms with Madame's finery, imagination providing what life can't.

The music Lunn provides them is on the arid side of recitative, occasionally expanding into the full-out aria, the voices kept afloat by an orchestra of nine players, unfussily conducted by Dominic Wheeler.

OPERA
THE MAIDS
LYRIC THEATRE
HAMMERSMITH

For much of the opera the orchestra plays like the pit band for a sleazily high-class floorshow. Latinate rhythms creep at every turn, and at one point the brothers Robson tango across the stage. The Robsons are intense performers, and singing together magnifies that.

The impoverishment of the maids' relationship is underlined by the brief appearance of Madame, whose heartless glamour is well caught by Emma Selway. Lunn gives her the most fully operatic music, to which Selway responds grandly.

Like Lunn's music, Fuchs' direction voids expressionistic extremes, while her skilfully condensed libretto allows the composer to work swiftly: the whole opera lasts 80 minutes. I'm still not convinced that the theatre is where opera should be looking for its stories, but *The Maids* (developed through the ENO Contemporary Opera Studio) tells its story neatly and economically.

NICK KIMBERLEY performs at Lyric tonight and on 16, 17, 19, 20 June (0181 741 2311); and at Oxford Play-

Havana got news for you

SIX MONTHS shy of her 70th birthday, Celina Gonzalez is the hot rockin' mama of Cuban country, a diva who had her first hit, the timeless *Santa Barbara*, 50 years ago and who arrives on our windswept shores trailing international awards. This show heralds the release of *Desde La Habana Te Traigo*, her first album in 10 years. That's not to say she hasn't been busy - she's fitted in performances with a cast of thousands. But Gonzalez, born in the remote village of Matanzas, preserves a certain disdain for the glitz of showbiz and a fiery Latin temper to go with it; when RCA Victor kept bugging her to sign with them, she

THEATRE
TROILUS AND CRESSIDA
REGENT'S PARK OPEN AIR
THEATRE

finally barked: "Aren't you the label with the little doggie as a logo? Well, you can take that dog, cook it up and eat it."

Gonzalez's voice is imbued with years of experience, and she uses it to tell stories of the peasant life she knew. Nevertheless, this was a party night and they were tangoing in the aisles. Many songs came from the new CD, a representation of Girl Power that knocks Geri Halliwell into a pair of fishnets. So we had the heady *A la Reina*

del Mar, dedicated to Yoruba sea goddess, and *El Rey Del Mundo*, a sprightly mariachi strut inspired by Chango, mythical warrior queen of thunder and a woman who clearly knows how to have a good time.

The deeply romantic *Yo Soy tu Amigo* serenades the lover; *Cita en el Platanal* is a sexy samba set in a banana grove every peasant would traditionally plant and which young lovers traditionally find the most inspiring place for illicit trysts.

A tiny woman of Plat-like proportions, in red finches and embroidered shawl, Gonzalez performs amid a sea of testosterone, flanked by her six-strong band of swarthy caballeros; to

her left is her son, and on congos her gangly grandson. The music is wild and organic, but it's the diva's voice that carries the show. You can hear why Gonzalez stresses the importance of the decima, a 10-verse rhyme with a precise count of syllables. This melody transforms the voice into a searing instrument, around which Creole guitars and flaring trumpets career. Rain-soaked Londoners were transported to the steaming streets of a fiesta on the Gulf of Mexico. Not everyone can do this.

Arriba! This review appeared in later editions of yesterday's paper. GLYN BROWN

the **big swap**
five couples, one big idea

"RACY, SEXY and COOL" - John Neighbour, COMSOPOLITAN

"RAUNCHY... ADULT and INTELLIGENT" - Stuart Rose, DAILY MIRROR

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'No government can stop this disaster'

AFTER THE DELUGE
(FROM PAGE ONE)

Two towns, Sarno and Quindici, were deluged as the mudslides consumed streets, houses and bridges. More than 160 bodies have been recovered, and several more remain unaccounted for. But this is not the worst that Naples has had to endure, or is likely to face again in the future.

There have been countless smaller mudslides in recent years, plus a handful of earthquakes, including the shockingly powerful tremor that brought half of southern Italy to its knees in 1980. The pattern of these disasters is always depressingly familiar: a freak of nature compounded by the irresponsibility of a local government that is either corrupt or non-existent, by erosion of the environment through industrial exploitation, deforestation and pollution, and - more often than not - by the consequences of an uncontrolled rash of illegal building.

The recent mudslides are a case in point. The hills above Sarno and Quindici, which were once farmed intensively, have now been abandoned; trees and shrubs have withered and died, and dry stone walls and terraced cultivation have disappeared, making the ground loose and prone to severe erosion. It certainly does not help that much of the groundwater is pumped for consumption across southern Italy, nor that the river Sarno is polluted with effluent from a tanning factory.

The Naples area as a whole is an extraordinary mixture of awesome natural wonders and human abuse, of beauty and catastrophe. Not only is there the looming presence of Vesuvius to the east, but also volcanic activity to the west around Pozzuoli, where the land periodically rises and falls under the pressure of subterranean gases.

The city of Naples itself is ringed by veriginously steep hills that have been covered by a labyrinth of asphalt and over-grade housing, much of it the result of corrupt land deals or illegal construction. Landslides are a constant fear. In many places, the ground forms a thin layer of tuffaceous rock above a network of vast underground caverns. The combination of poorly applied cement, inefficient drains and open sewers sometimes cause the ground to give way altogether and suck a sliver of urban confusion into the depths.

In the old days Neapolitans put their faith in their quixotic patron saint, San Gennaro, to ward off the worst of these ills. The saint is still venerated in a three-yearly ceremony at the Cathedral in which a phial of his blood mysteriously turns liquid as a sign of his continuing protection.

But most people, particularly the younger generation, have put such fatalistic superstition to one side in favour of more materialistic solutions to their prob-



Trecase, in the shadow of Vesuvius. It might look picturesque now, but when the volcano erupts again, it won't be so pretty

Riccardo Venturi

lems. For a population that until a generation or two ago was still eking a miserable living from the land, owning property remains the key priority.

The first outbreak of illegal building came after the war and was accompanied by a particularly virulent collusion between building speculators and corrupt local politicians that was famously denounced by Francesco Rosi in his film *Le Mani sulla Città*. A half-hearted attempt at regulation came in 1972, but the result was merely to drive what few official building projects there were out of the market and leave the field open to illegal speculators backed by the Camorra. Over the next 20 years, the hills, the coastline and the formerly modest towns beneath Vesuvius turned into an unbroken field of concrete.

Ancient Pompeii, which should have served as a stern reminder of the dangers of building under the volcano, was blocked in on all sides by its modern namesake. Ancient Herculaneum was virtually swallowed up by the new settlement, Ercolano, and is now invisible either from the railway line above or the seafront below. In some cases the builders obtained a token license from the city, usually to build an outhouse or a shed that was then expanded into a cluster of houses or a lower block. But most of the time they didn't bother.

In the words of the city planning expert Roberto Gianni, the local political authorities showed nothing but "neglect, if not scorn" for the rape of one of the most beautiful bays in Europe. "Construction was the engine driving the whole Neapolitan econ-

omy. The only way people understood the term "planning" was as a licence to keep building more," Gianni said.

There were more reasonable periods, such as the Communist administration of 1975-83 which succeeded in knocking down a few hundred illegal buildings and imposing thousands more; but these operations were bitterly opposed by public opinion, the media and even the courts. The Left tried to draw a distinction between illegal housing built out of need and the venal speculations of property developers; the distinction did not really exist, though, and was largely a symptom of the political class's subjugation to the construction magnates.

Modern Naples is little short of a basket case. It has the highest birth rate and the highest population growth in Italy; its

population density is 15 times the national average. Traffic moves more slowly (10 mph) than anywhere else in the country. Astonishingly, only 26 per cent of Naples province is connected to a proper sewage system. Of 3,300 criminal proceedings currently in progress in Italy for crimes against the environment, 90 per cent are in the Campania region around Naples. Up in Chiaiano and Camaldoli, in an area that was all wooded rolling hills until the 1970s, the sewage flows through natural river beds and seeps into houses.

Many of the chestnut trees that stood proudly upon Naples' highest hill have been infected and died. Much of the area has been used as a quarry for tuff, the soft yellow rock on which Naples is built. Some of the quarries in the area are a hundred me-

tres deep, driving a series of alarming sheer wedges into the natural landscape. They are all illegal, but that did not stop the city council from using tuff from these quarries to restore the Royal Palace for the G7 meeting held in Naples in 1994.

Some effort has been made to preserve the geological integrity of Camaldoli hill by opening a city park at its summit. But the park is unmanned apart from two middle-aged men on work experience schemes. Much of it has been closed off for lack of maintenance; the chestnut trees have been pruned in years and are dying, and dying. The chances are high that one day part of the hillside will simply come away, drowning the suburbs of Piazzola Soccavo below in mud and rock.

What can be done to avert such disasters? Precious little in the short term. The good news is that illegal building has come to a standstill since the collapse of the political order under a sea of corruption scandals, and the election of an energetic left-wing city council in 1993. There has even been a return to agricultural land use on a modest scale.

But the bad news is that the problems of illegal house and environmental blight are too huge for any city government to tackle within a reasonable time-span. Roberto Gianni, who is now chief town planner, has ambitions to create a green belt of countryside on the hills above the city. The head of Chiaiano district, a young architect called Agostino Di Lorenzo, wants to turn one of the tuff quarries into an open-air theatre.

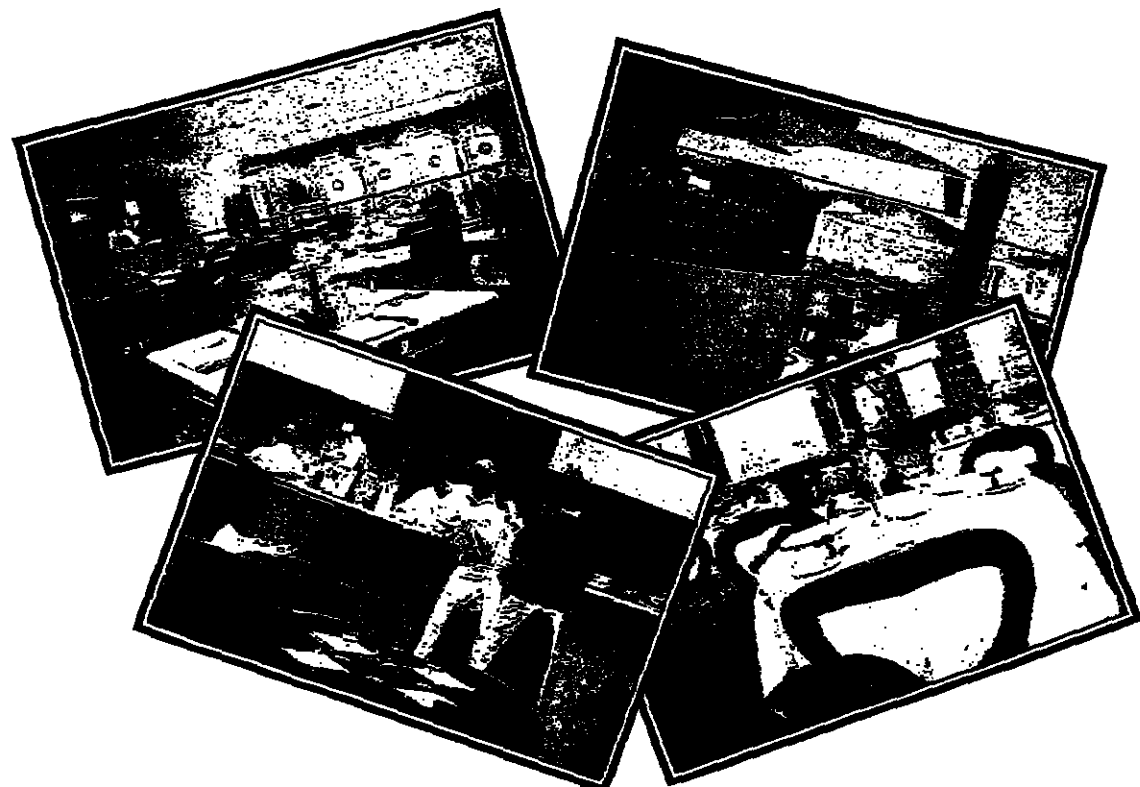
Across Naples, the strategy is to look at illegal projects that could feasibly be turned into full-blown housing developments and offset them by identifying buildings that need to be knocked down for environmental or security reasons. That way urbanisation can be contained and the city can gradually breathe again.

The problem is that this strategy cannot work beneath Vesuvius, where population density is so great that there is no room left for manoeuvre. The only way to shift people and make room for parks and proper roads would be to build further up the mountain, which is not an option. The city of Torre Annunziata has not even closed its absurdly positioned hospital, which lies at the point where one of the main lava flows from Vesuvius would flow into the sea in the event of an eruption.

A few hundred yards uphill, the people of San Vito see little reason to put any faith in the state. "When the moment comes, nobody will come to save us," lamented one resident, a middle-aged man who wanted to be known as Gemaro.

He gestured vaguely towards the Camorra compound a few hundred yards from his house. "This is a place where the strong get ahead, not those who follow the rules. We're afraid of a lot of things besides the volcano."

THIS WEEK IN THE SEVEN-SECTION INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



THE 100 BEST RESTAURANTS IN LONDON

A special pull-out guide produced
in conjunction with the experts from

Time Out

What all the best-dressed corpses will be wearing

Death is no
excuse for bad
dress sense.
By Glenda
Cooper



Adelaide Acolatse with her immortal design, 'Landscape in Spring'

Steve Hill

"DYING IS an art like everything else/ do it exceptionally well". So said Sylvia Plath. But then she was an American.

The British way of death has been more subdued. Until the death last year of Diana, Princess of Wales, when a nation surprised itself with its expressions of grief, it has been thought that the British did not know how to raise dying to an art form.

The death industry is wanting to transform itself. And today an exhibition will be held in a scene straight out of the 19th century - when one of the oldest funeral-makers in the country shows off the winning funeral gowns from its national competition. It is fashion to die for.

The skies were a funeral grey, the rain pouring down as the exhibition was prepared this week in Peterborough, the first stop on a national tour. Held in the lavish carriages of the Nene Valley steam railway, the day had been designated "Travelers' Rest" - the sort of grim joke that appeals to the death industry.

Most of us would rather not think about what happens at the end. But Vic Fearn and Company want us to. And, more than that, they want us to think about going out in style.

"Do we affect fashion in the grave?" asked the Duchess of Malfi, awaiting the executioner sent by her evil brothers. "Most ambitiously," her coffin-maker replied. The Duchess would be satisfied at Nene. All around are gowns and shrouds for the well-dressed deceased, from the traditional brown Irish fash-

ion to the glitzy black and red tuff, from the long white bridal garment to the Marilyn Monroe gauze. Nina Simone blares out. Morbid? No, say the organisers, it is time that we address the British fear of death.

Sue Pearl, one of the exhibitors and a woman who has studied cultures of death around the world, believes fervently that we need to change our attitudes: "We should see someone's death as a way of celebrating their life. In the West, we are very anal retentive about death."

"I'd like to see something like Madagascar where people have a temporary burial while the relatives save up for two or three years and then, when they have the money, they have a reburial and a really big party. Or like New Orleans, where they have bands and dancing."

Many of the gowns are delicately made and draped over exquisitely constructed mannequins. So, for a moment, you forget what they are for until you find yourself peering over a sateen gown with a huge picture of the Sacred Heart or an

18th-century-style muslin gown dedicated to the Titanic.

Helpers at hand are eager to tell you that it is fashionable in Ireland to be buried in your suit, whereas in England the plain white gown is still the norm. It is at moments like these that you start to think you are suddenly on the set of television series *The Addams Family*, but for those who work with death, it is a banal fact of life. While everyone else winces when someone shouts "Mind the coffin - do we want one in here or two?" or invites you to sit down with a cup of coffee next to a be-shrouded mannequin whose wire hand is waving gently in the wind, these people take it all in their stride.

"Well the great thing is business is never bad. My dad used to be a gravedigger and our house is in a cemetery," says Claire Lawton, another of the exhibitors. "I've always lived around gravestones. I thought it was normal. I suppose other people thought it was freaky."

David Crampton, one of the directors of Vic Fearn, agrees that, in the end, it shows more respect to make sure our dear-

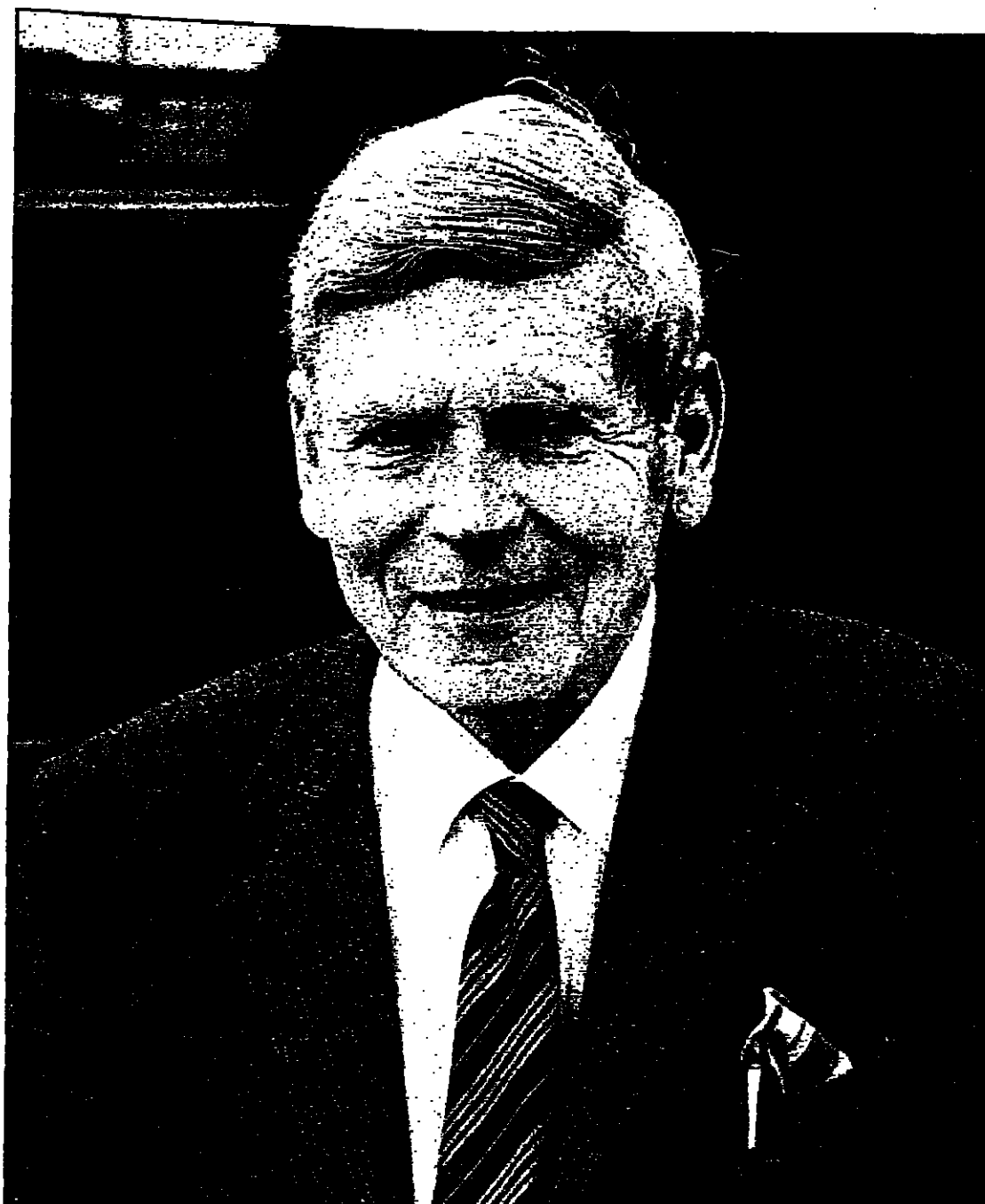
est get a good send off, however alien we may find pre-planning. One of his favourite customers is a lady in the North East, who has already taken possession of her coffin designed to look like a Red Arrows plane.

"We are very, very traditional in this country. We wanted to change that. But let's face it, we're not an industry which does a lot of PR," he says. "It's not grim," says Urtia Williams, also of Vic Fearn. "We just don't want people to be fearful. We want to beautify death and give people more choice, on what is such an important occasion to make a personal gesture."

But for those who feel all this might be getting a bit much, we still have a long way to go before our cult of death reaches the level of former civilisations.

Jessica Mitford, taking a tour of the Museum of Embalming in Texas, came to the section devoted to ancient Egypt and exclaimed: "Now that was a society that let the funeral directors get completely out of control."

Half a century of healing



DR ANTHONY TWORT

JOINED THE NHS IN 1948

Fifty years ago saw the birth of the National Health Service, the cornerstone of the welfare state. Dr Anthony Twort qualified as a doctor in its first month and struggled to fit in to a system being recast for the post-war age. Dr. Saurabh Jha qualified last year, and is now working as a house officer in a busy hospital. Here, they compare the NHS they know



DR SAURABH JHA

JOINED THE NHS IN 1997

ANTHONY TWORT was lucky to train at St Thomas's and get his first house job there. "In those days it was dependent on how you did in your exams, but also who your father was and luckily my father was there."

He remembers the beginning of the NHS clearly. "There was a feeling of suspicion about the NHS, particularly in the teaching hospitals. For a young person like me, you were so busy it didn't make a great deal of difference, but I had mixed feelings. Obviously, there was the benefit of government money but there was also the anxiety about lay administration and who was in control. I remember the Christmas show that year where we all sang a song 'The Army of Clerks Has Won the Day'."

Dr Twort worked in casualty and once every four weeks they would have what they called "a major week" when surgical and medical emergencies were pushed through. "I remember seeing one chap at the end of one of these major weeks. He was so exhausted. He was near breaking

point. We used to yearn for a few bed blockers so that we could get another emergency case in to be dealt with."

"The Resident Assistant Physician and the Resident Assistant Surgeon had the real control. The consultants would do their Harley Street stuff and they varied an awful lot. We used to appreciate consultants who could talk about something outside medicine, who could talk about Shakespeare or philosophy. At that time, it was very much that the patients weren't told anything; there was no sense of the partnership idea in those days. And so there was quite a lot of this Sir Lancelot Spratt business. There was often a lack of sensitivity that was absolutely shocking to the house officers. I remember one paediatrician consultant being irritated by a mother who was only asking him for some information and he turned round and told everyone, including the students 'This poor child is suffering from materitis'."

He said that the atmosphere of the hospital was quite religious. "Prayers on the

wards and nurses singing hymns." But the question of euthanasia did come up. "It was helping people. People who might linger in a miserable way might be given slightly more painkillers than was strictly necessary. It was quite well known."

When Dr Twort started, the NHS was very different from today. There was no ultrasound, no imaging techniques, primitive radiotherapy used radium which could be hazardous and there were no computers, which he feels has made a tremendous difference.

"But one of the biggest differences now, I think, is the great expectations on behalf of the population. The whole idea of demand and the confidence people have that they should get what they want. There is a greater moral responsibility now because of the problem of financing and the whole current debate over rationing."

Dr Twort is glad that he worked in the NHS all his life. Asked what he thinks it will be like in 50 years, though, and he raises his eyes to the sky. "Heaven only knows."

SAURABH JHA also decided to go into medicine, following in his father's footsteps. "I decided quite a long time ago I wanted to do medicine. I thought it would be a fairly promising career, although I didn't have a clue what it involved."

Dr Jha is a surgical house officer which means unless he has spent the night on call, he's expected to be in at 8am when he's working and will not finish until about 6.30pm. He works in a team of three, with two other house officers, and his main work is to do the two ward rounds every day. "We go through the list and see which of the patients are high priority, and which are low priority, and divide up the workloads. So at this stage in my career, I am not doing any surgery. My job is to look after the patients, take forward the paper work, discharge them and manage the follow-up."

He thinks consultants are less aloof than they used to be and that the doctor patient relationship has altered radically since Dr Twort's day. "It certainly has done in surgery. We explain all the options to the

patient now and the relative merits of these options as far as possible, and get them to make the decision, although we obviously say which decision we would prefer that they take. But informed consent is now seen as a very important part of the surgical procedure."

Despite the increasing technological advances, he thinks that it is important to maintain a human side to the NHS. "The one thing I won't forget, the one thing I'm proud of, is when I was in medical school here, and there was a patient who was getting very, very frustrated because they had been waiting quite a few hours for their procedure and no one seemed willing to speak to them. So I just sat down for 20 to 30 minutes and managed to calm them down, and that's what I'm really proud of."

Does he feel that Dr Twort's fears about the army of clerks is justified? "I think bureaucracy is something that more senior people in the NHS than me have to worry about," he says tactfully. "It doesn't really affect me."

Looking back over the NHS for 50 years, he singles out two things as very important. "In technological terms, first the advance in day surgery so that people can go back home the same day as long as they're young, healthy and fit. The second advance is keyhole surgery which means that post-operative stays and complications have been very much reduced."

How does he think the NHS will be in 50 years to come? "I think there still will be an NHS which will survive. The people of England have got used to using the system and you can't take it away from them, although I think certain specialities will be more or less private, such as orthopaedics. I don't think we're going to become the United States, though. I think insurance companies have probably reached saturation point. You have to believe in the NHS to justify your presence working here," he says.

But he doesn't necessarily see himself in the NHS in 50 years time. "The financial rewards of private work would be welcome alongside the work you do for the NHS."

Game of two generations

Football is more than a sport – especially when it's the emotional concrete in fathers' relationships with their sons. By Bruce Millar

WE MAKE an impeccably choreographed double act in front of the TV – each gesture in unison, every movement timed to perfection; our very brows knit simultaneously, our mouths form O shapes for a sharp intake of breath. I am watching the World Cup with my seven-year-old son Darcy. We make the moves by instinct, now quietly concentrated, now leaping from our chairs with the guttural male roar that turns my wife's stomach.

The boy's learning fast. Only last year he burst into tears, thinking something terrible must have happened when I let out a loud whoop of celebration at a Chelsea goal while watching a match on TV. Now he makes more noise than I do. After a recent game with Broomwood Boys under eights, Darcy announced: "Let's go to the pub and drink beer." And it's not all conditioning: his 10-year-old brother Tom has the full complement of boisterous male characteristics but has never seen the point of football.

Darcy is, give or take a few months, the age I was in 1966, when England's only World Cup victory became one of my key early memories – and which has blighted watching England ever since: unlike earlier or later generations, I have been conditioned to think that England do have a right to win the World Cup. More bizarrely, perhaps, Darcy wants Norway to win.

Back in '66, we didn't need tabloid newspapers to tell us the final against West Germany was a replay



Bruce Millar and Darcy play fantasy football Neville Elder

of '45, and Alf Ramsey had already let us know that Argentinians were animals. Kids these days just don't get it. Why Norway? "England have won the World Cup once before, so it's only fair," Darcy explained to me. "Besides, Tore Andre Flo plays for Norway." This young beanpole of a striker joined Chelsea last year and quickly established himself as Darcy's favourite player – he wanted to invite Tore Andre for Christmas lunch with us because he was such a long way from home. Forget about the Euro: football's megabucks, multi-national Premiership has already destroyed national boundaries for Darcy's generation. These differences count for little:

watching football together is as close as we get, father and son, just as when we play one-a-side games in the park with costs for goals. He is always Chelsea, winning 10-9 after an epic fightback against my Middlesbrough, Arsenal or Atletico Madrid. The take-it-in-turn commentary has hardly changed in the three decades since I first played: "He shoots, he scores, and it's a wonderful goal as Chelsea claw themselves back into the game."

More than that, and quite uncannily, I have not changed in those 30-odd years. I am not an adult making a leap of the imagination to meet my son on his seven-year-old's territory: while we play, I am, once

again, the boy who watched England win the World Cup in 1966. Forget primal screaming, rebirth therapy, LSD – through the agency of football I have achieved that holy grail of psychologists, the controlled regression. I have delved deep into my subconscious to recapture the clear, innocent vision of a child. And, as we play, I recognise my childhood re-enacted in front of me as my son.

The links go further. When I recall England's march to triumph in 1966, two specific memories come to mind: I was always wearing pyjamas and a dressing gown, and my father was always watching with me. For the following 10 years, the closest, most relaxed, most exclusive relationship I had with my father was in front of Match of the Day. So the act of watching football with Darcy gives him a direct link with a grandfather who died 15 years before he was born.

Some time ago, I was in a room full of students invigilating an exam when, to my astonishment, I found myself in tears reading an article in which a father said he could no longer bear to watch football on TV since his son had left home for university, so acutely did he feel the son's absence. How I recognised the emotion. For too many years I have watched football alone, faintly dissatisfied, or, on occasion, sought comradeship in a pub with a big screen. Now Darcy is old enough I realise that, for me, watching football is not about watching with mates: it is a father and son thing.

Where only foreigners wear white macs

An EU summit in Cardiff has made its cabbies smile

"IT'S LIKE THIS, mate," says the big man as he grinds a cigarette end into the pavement and hitches up his trousers around an ample waist. "We're your new ambassadors."

He pauses for effect and takes a bite out of a warm Kairdaff pie before continuing: "We've got to smile. Not all the time though, you'd look stupid wouldn't you? When I see a foreign bloke, I've now got to smile at him. You can tell they're foreign because there's something about them: they've often got white macs on."

The big man is a Cardiff cab driver and he is enthusing about this coming weekend when the European Summit circus rolls into town. Ahead of the summit, which will be attended by Europe's 15 heads of state and their entourages, some 700 of the city's cabbies have attended a three-hour course at a council-run charm school to learn how to be smart, courteous and tolerant.

Some, says the Wales Tourist Board, have also been given a six-language tool kit, which allows them to "sort out any basic problems, from saying hello at the terminal, stating the fare, to giving change and directions."

But it's not just the cabbies, their shirts emblazoned with Proud to be Professional over the left breast, who have been gearing up for Le Week-end, when the Queen, 60 European heads of state and ministers, plus 1,500 delegates and support staff, and 3,000 media folk descend on the city. With around 5,000 opinion leaders in town and a potential worldwide

television audience running into millions, the city is taking the opportunity to show off its assets.

The summit, which marks the climax to the UK's six-month presidency of the EU, will bring in £2m this weekend and the TV exposure will permanently boost tourism to the tune of £3.7m or so a year.

One big problem has been solved: a much publicised search for a hotel



bed big enough to accommodate the comfortably proportioned German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, has been successfully concluded. With that matter out of the way, the focus is now on selling the city.

Frank Hennessy, broadcaster, entertainer and founder of the Kairdaff Language Society, says people who see Cardiff for the first time because of the summit will be shocked. "It's a beautiful city – one of the best in Europe," he enthuses. Apart from the official sites, such as the revamped docklands and the

castle – but not the new green fields in the adjacent valleys that were once coal pits – visitors will be able to lap up a cosmopolitan culture.

Those visitors prepared to look beyond the official entertainment – including the Euro Wave Floral Exhibition – will be able to sample food and drink such as Skull Attack, a local beer, the Carotne Street Welsh kebab, faggots and peas, and the legendary "aarf and aarf".

"When curry entered the eating habits of Cardiffians in the late Fifties, they never managed to give up chips, but being cosmopolitan folk they added a portion of rice as well with the curry on top, and so created the 'aarf and aarf', which remains Cardiff's only contribution to world cuisine," explains Rhodri Morgan, MP for Cardiff West.

Close behind the "aarf and aarf" is the Kairdaff pie, a beast of a pastie, served volcanically hot and, some say, best eaten when the senses have been dulled by alcohol.

"On one occasion," says Hennessy, "The health and safety people took one of the pies and found there was no meat in it. Now most of us had known that for years, but the bloke said he'd done it to save the jobs of his workers as a result of the BSE crisis."

"They're the only meat pies you can't catch BSE off and we love 'em, especially after a pint of Dark. Mind you, they've done extensive scientific tests and they still don't know what's in them."

ROGER DOBSON

CUTTINGS

THE CROSS-CHANNEL tunnel makes it astonishingly easy to get across to Holland. On one recent trip, we left London at a not-too-pleasant hour in the morning and were in Rotterdam by 10am, just as the museum we wanted to go to was opening. So the International Specialist Nursery Days at Bingen in the Netherlands are closer than you may think. They take place from 19-21 June at a pretty house and garden owned by the van Weede family, whose brainchild the show is. Marijke Joosten from The Netherlands will be showing hemerocallis, *Naturwuchs* from Germany are bringing *dianthus* and *erysimum*, Scott's of England will be taking across their best clematis, and the Silene nursery from Belgium will be specialising in unusual annuals. The show is open on Friday, 1-6pm, and on Saturday and Sunday, 10am-6pm. Entrance costs £15 (about £5).

Huis Bingen is near the town of Doesburg in Gelderland, the eastern part of the Netherlands. Get there via the A12 to Utrecht, take exit 29 signposted Zevenaar/Didam and follow directions to Doesburg. Bingen is well signposted.

THE MIDLAND Bonsai Society is holding a show at the Birmingham Botanic Garden tomorrow (11am-5pm). Leave time to wander round the gardens themselves. They were laid out in 1829 by one of my heroes, the polymath and garden guru of the time, John Claudius Loudon. The plant hunter 'Chinese' Wilson was a student here towards the end of the last century, and there is a collection of the many fine plants that he was responsible for introducing to the country. The gardens are at Westbourne Road, Edgbaston, two miles south west of the city. For information call 0121 454 1860.

WEEKEND WORK

■ Tackle overgrown lilac by cutting out some of the older branches entirely, at ground level. This will rejuvenate the bush and encourage production of fresh young shoots from the base. Without this sort of regular attention, lilacs grow tall, leggy and unproductive. ■ Dead-head the rest of the bush, cutting spent flowers back to the first pair of leaves below the flower-head. ■ The ornamental *rubus* 'Benenden' also needs to be pruned after flowering. Cut out about a third of the stems at ground level. If no new shoots have sprung up, prune back some of the existing growth to the point where a strong, new, pinkish-coloured shoot has broken from the older, snuff-coloured wood. ■ Set out plants of the cabbagey sort, such as Brussels sprouts, broccoli and curly kale. Field-grown plants

are much stronger than the container-grown variety. ■ Leeks, celery and celeriac can be planted out now and sowings made of beetroot, late carrots and kohlrabi. ■ Take cuttings of perennial wallflowers such as 'Harpur Crewe' and 'Constant Cheer'. Pull off lateral shoots about 2in long with a heel and push them into some sandy compost. The climbing hydrangea *H. petiolaris* can be bulked up from cuttings of vigorous side-shoots. ■ If possible, tear off rose suckers before they begin to weaken the rose they are meant to be helping. Their leaves are smaller (and often a paler, greyish green) than those of proper roses. Digging them out, rather than pulling them, may damage the rootstock, which in turn will produce even more suckers.

ANNA PAVORD

Perpetual salad daze

Spinach, rocket, lettuce and other leaves not only provide a crisp crop, they're also perfect for pattern-making in the garden. By Anna Pavord

SPINACH LABOURS under the burden of being thought to be good for you. Bad things are so much more interesting. But we've just eaten the first of this year's crop and it was ambrosial. Water is the key. You need lots of the stuff while the crop is growing and none when you cook it. This year, growing conditions were perfect. The soil was warm at sowing time and there was plenty of moisture in it. I used 'Triathlon' (Marshall's, £1.09).

Real spinach - as distinct from "perpetual" spinach - does best in cool conditions. Because it bolts away in heat, I usually stop sowing at the end of May, then try another crop in August for autumn picking. If you sow in September or October, the spinach will overwinter and be ready to eat by April. Real spinach, *Spinachia oleracea*, is an annual, a native of the western Himalayas that reached England only in the 16th century. Hybridisers ever since have been trying to marry the best qualities of two types of annual spinach: prickly-seeded types, which have narrow leaves but are not so prone to "bolt", and smooth-seeded types that have much bigger, lusher leaves, but can't take heat. New Zealand spinach, *Tetragonia tetragonioides*, is a different animal altogether, native to the Pacific. These are the greens that the intrepid 18th-century voyager Captain Cook collected by the boatload in New Zealand to stop his soldiers getting scurvy. I think the taste of proper spinach is better. Nevertheless, I have sown the New Zealand kind (Suffolk Herbs, 75p); it stands the heat well and plugs the summer spinach gap.

Perhaps more spinach is now eaten raw than cooked, with the baby leaves tossed in salads or used like watercress in sandwiches. That's wasteful of the crop, but delicious. Used like this, you need lots of other saladings to go with it: lettuces of all kinds, chard, radicchio, rocket, lamb's lettuce. Last year's chicory is just running up to seed in our garden. The flowers are a lovely sky blue, but they'll have to go. They get in the way of the pattern-making that is my present obsession in the vegetable garden.

It started in a smallish way when I drew a series of big X-shapes along the bottom border, dividing it up into a regular pattern of diamonds and triangles. All the diamonds are now planted with tomatoes, and the triangles are each filled with a different salad crop. By next year I hope to have completed planting the low, evergreen germander hedges that will give the border structure in winter.

It's become my favourite bit of the garden, and it is one of the prettiest just now, with the purple globes of giant chives mixed with the deep red flowers of dianthus 'Hidcote' and the blue flower spikes of a grey-leaved Balkan sage in one triangle, contrasting with the ludicrously glossy, crinkled leaves of a red picking lettuce, 'Redina' (Marshall's, £1.25) in another. As with the spinach, you can pick the leaves of loose lettuces such as this one from the seedling stage onwards.

In the next triangle is a crisp iceberg lettuce, 'Nevada' (Marshall's, £1.80), a bright green against the marigolds in the neighbouring patch. You can't call marigold a salad

crop, but the petals look good scattered on salad leaves.

Rocket, radish, coriander, parsley and the endive 'Sailor' (Marshall's, £1.09) live in other triangles. I've only just sown the endive, which doesn't prosper if it goes in before May. You sow it just like lettuce, then thin out the plants to at least 1ft apart. They make flat tops, tight-hearted, stronger-tasting than lettuce. You can blanch them by covering each heart with a saucer. The advantage of endive is that, sown in succession between now and August, it will keep you in salads till Christmas.

Successional sowing... it seems such a comforting thought: an endless conveyor-belt of vegetables in perfect condition, each crop neatly dovetailing with the next. You can, in principle, sow a little rocket and a soupcon of radish seed fortnightly. But whether you get that seamless succession is entirely in the lap of the gods. If the weather is hot, seed germination may be delayed, but the growth of crops above ground will be accelerated. If it is cool, your second and third sowings may come on tap while you are still content with your first.

One principle you can hang on to: the shorter time it takes a crop to come to maturity, the more successional sowings you have to make.

Once you have nipped off the terminal leaf of a rocket plant, the crop goes downhill. I sowed our first lot (Mar-

shall's, 66p) on 6 April and was picking it six weeks later. As with spinach, you get the best crops in spring and autumn. In the heat of summer, rocket runs to seed fast. You can slow down the tendency by sowing in semi-shade, and also by keeping the patches well watered.

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Super city animals

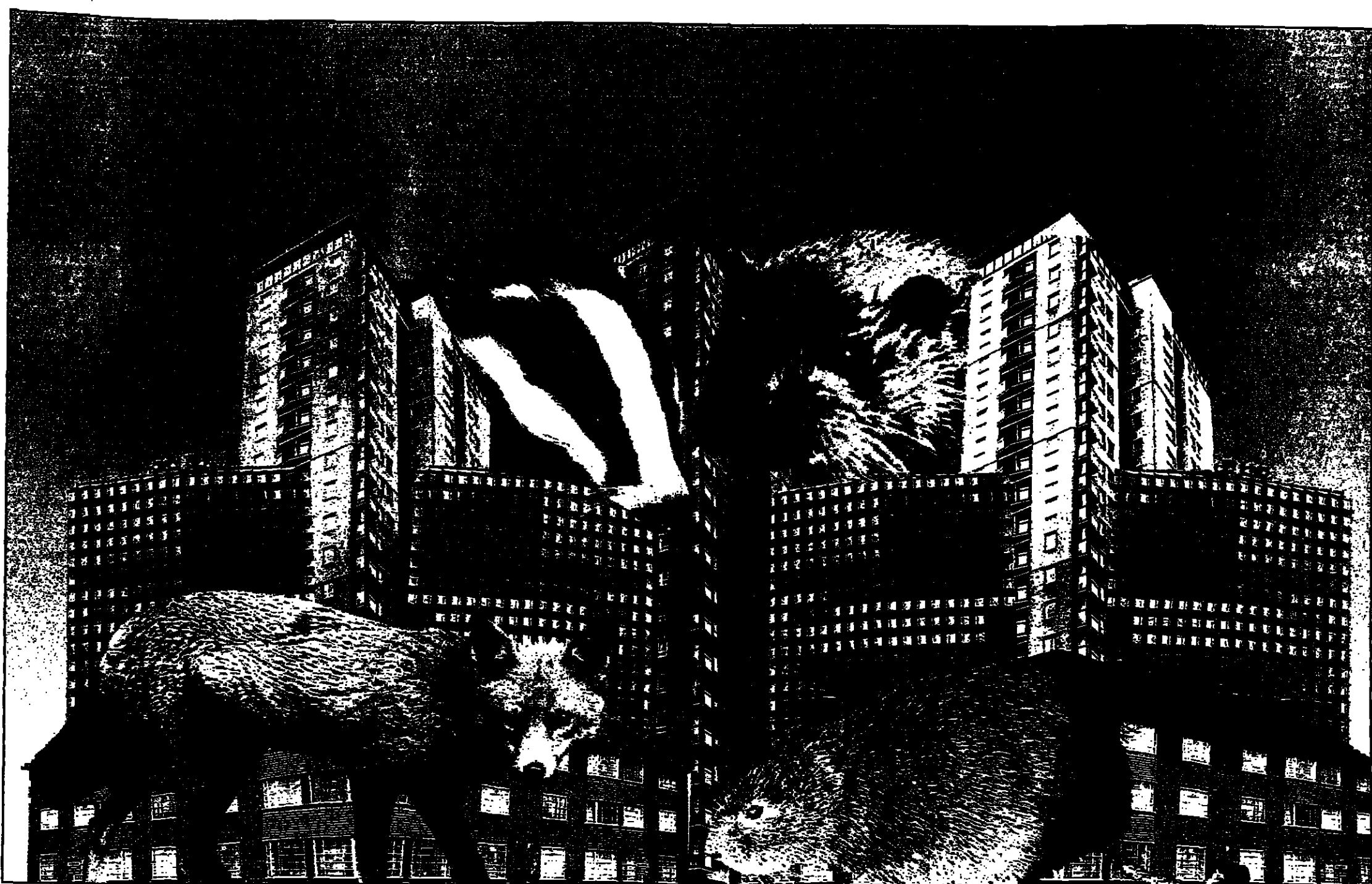
Yesterday
foxes, today
otters,
tomorrow
peregrine
falcons?
Daniel Butler
on the wild
creatures
invading
our cities

THE NEWS that otters are moving into our cities for the first time in two centuries prompted a euphoric reaction earlier this week. They regularly swim through Southampton, one was seen in a Kidderminster car park, and another has been taking tubs from workmen in Shrewsbury. Reports from Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle and Edinburgh confirm the pattern, with perhaps the most unusual sighting coming from Sidmouth, where an adult loped down the High Street in broad daylight.

In fact otters are merely the latest in a long line of rural immigrants. Most notable is the urban fox, which began to crop up in numbers during the Sixties, prompting a hysterical reaction from some who predicted that children would be attacked and rabies would run rampant. This was unduly pessimistic, of course, but in other respects the foxes certainly seem to have set a trend, which mirrors mankind's own migration from town to country.

Badgers were the next to attract attention (although most of them were old residents whose presence had previously gone largely unremarked) and since then the list has grown every year. Along with otters, peregrines are the latest high-profile entrants. Thirty years ago the British population of these birds was reeling from the effects of DDT and they were on the verge of dying out. Today there are around 1,200 pairs, each in search of a suitable cliff on which to nest. Indeed, now almost every natural site is occupied and the population pressure is so great that some are turning to man-made alternatives. One pair has already bred on Swansea Post Office Tower, another on a Derbyshire power station, while a third is currently nesting on a block of flats in Brighton.

There seems every likelihood that these are just the vanguard



Urban peregrines are well established in America (albeit from introduced, captive-bred stock) where they thrive on the seemingly limitless supplies of feral pigeons. There is no shortage of these in our own cities, along with thousands of potential nest ledges. And, after all, the peregrine's smaller cousin, the kestrel, has not only thrived on motorway verges, but has become a familiar sight in most big towns, while the elusive sparrowhawk is far more common in suburbia than many human inhabitants may realise.

Similarly, until recently the bird guides proclaimed that tawny owls were exclusively woodland dwellers, but now their characteristic "too-wit-too-woo" can be heard ringing out across Highbury Fields in the heart

of Islington, one of London's most built-up boroughs. Greater spotted woodpeckers and wood pigeons have also made the transition from trees to concrete, not to mention the ubiquitous blue tit which has long since swapped its diet of oak canopy caterpillars for doorstep milk bottles. Cormorants have also chosen to move in from the coast, and now their characteristic, long-necked silhouettes are a common sight around inland lakes, gravel pits and rivers - much to the chagrin of anglers and fish farmers.

It is, of course, relatively easy for birds to wing their way into town, but you might have thought that Tarmac walls and traffic would deter mammals. Far from it, there are plenty of green corridors into the hearts of even our largest cities: along railway lines, canals, even sewers.

The water vole is one that has made it. Although it has recently disappeared from two-thirds of its former geographical range, some of its healthiest strongholds are within built-up areas. There are thriving populations in central Sheffield and Twickenham's Crane Park, for example, while a study in Avonmouth revealed increasing numbers. The voracious American mink, which is the main cause of the vole's general decline, shuns human disturbance, particularly when this comes from people exercising dogs. In addition, it prefers richer habitat than the generally degraded urban areas and so steers clear of cities. In contrast the voles are relatively

at ease in the presence of man, knowing that the safety of their burrows is only a few feet away, and they can eke out a living from even the meagre pickings of a canal bank. As a result, voles living along tow paths and in popular parks have suffered less than most.

The trend is not confined to small mammals, however, with creatures as large as deer being spotted in cities for the first time. Most reports, of course, are from leafier suburbs and concern the dog-sized muntjac and roe, but occasionally much larger examples crop up, such as the sika (a red deer look-alike) spotted bounding through central Leeds.

So what makes normally shy creatures suddenly swap the peace and quiet of the countryside for our

built-up areas? In the case of the otter and the water vole, improved water quality is a partial answer, while population pressure and habitat shortage accounts for the inflow of peregrines and owls. And what of the future? Which of today's unfamiliar creatures will be living alongside our children during the new millennium? Red kites are front-runners. Currently listed as one of our rarest birds, they are likely to be commonplace tomorrow. This large fork-tailed raptor was confined to mid-Wales at the beginning of the century, but numbers have slowly mushroomed, helped by successful introductions to the Chilterns, Northamptonshire and southern Scotland. And the prospect of urban kites now seems a very real possibility. After all, they were once sufficiently common for Shakespeare to warn housewives to guard their washing lest kites steal it for nesting material. Indeed, they are a familiar sight over many Continental cities. Anyone still raising an eyebrow should note that one was seen circling over Reading last week.

Despite this bright backdrop, Isabel Bretherton of the Wildlife Trusts cautions against complacency. "Although the urban picture is generally encouraging, there's a lot more we could do," she says. "Local authorities ought to be working more closely with wildlife trusts to improve parks as natural habitats, and there's a long way to go before we reverse the insensitive developments of the past."

It's time to restore our Trust ...

BEFORE CLOSE of business yesterday a package loaded with verbal dynamite was delivered to the head office of the National Trust in London. It contained eight nominations for election to the Trust's council at the next annual general meeting in November, together with supporting documents, and two resolutions deploring the Trust's recent conduct and attitude.

The missive emanated from Font - Friends of the National Trust - an organisation recently formed by Jo Collins, a barrister, and her husband Charles, a surgeon, who live at Crowcombe in Somerset. The spur that goaded them into action was the Trust's ban on stag-hunting over its land in the West Country, and its reneging on the wishes of an important donor, Sir Richard Acland, who expressly stated that he wanted hunting to continue over his land. Since then, however, anger has been fanned by numerous other aggravations, not least a refusal to allow bonfire beacons to be lit on its properties during the demonstration preceding the countryside march through London on 1 March this year.

"Do you still trust the National Trust?" demands Font's leaflet. "If you have left the National Trust in disgust, please rejoin and let Font know." The aim of the new body is to exert pressure from the inside, and bring the Trust back on to a line of management that shows greater understanding of country issues.

In a few weeks Font has acquired 600 members. In the words of one land agent, "The main concern is that the Trust is now a townie body, run by townies, and the greatest worry is that it has started going against the wishes of donors. I'm a trustee for many estates; several people have said to me, 'If I should die, for God's sake don't let my property go anywhere near the National Trust'."

One of the most outspoken critics is Robert Waley-Cohen, who, "as a gesture of anger", has removed "a significant amount of furniture, by volume and by value" from Upton Court, the country house near Banbury left to the Trust in 1948 by his wife's grandfather, Lord Bearsted. "This is a protest, to show the Trust that we're extremely displeased

The National Trust, set up to preserve the countryside, is accused of being a body for townies. By Duff Hart-Davis

with their arrogant approach," he says. "We feel they've got things completely wrong... and are not prepared to listen to reasoned argument."

Like many others who have been temporarily alienated, Waley-Cohen and his wife have long been staunch supporters of the Trust. "Fundamentally I think they do a fantastic job," he says. "But even your closest friends occasionally do something you disapprove of, and you try to steer them back in the right direction without getting punched on the nose."

Mr Waley-Cohen is by no means the only objector who has taken retaliatory action. Another is Lady Margaret Fortescue, who, with her sister, owns some valuable 18th-century china, the Pitt dinner service. It was on display in one of the National Trust houses, but Lady Margaret has removed it. As she remarks with some satisfaction, "four dining-room tables are now demoted."

The cause of her rage was the hunting ban, over which, she believes, the Trust "behaved monstrously".

Defenders of the Trust point out that the memoranda of wishes drawn up with donors are not, and have never been, legally binding. They admit that, at lower levels, power does sometimes go to the heads of local agents, who behave like tinpot gods, but they point out that in any organisation that employs thousands of people, there are bound to be a few weak members. They claim - rightly - that the Trust does a tremendous amount of first-class work.

Nevertheless, internal exchanges show that the Trust, if not rattled, is certainly nettled. A recent "discussion paper" from a regional director spoke of the "difficulties the Trust is having in trying to give out positive messages on countryside issues" and said that the implications of the deer-hunting ban are

"having to be faced on a weekly if not daily basis. It is still evident that many of our traditional supporters feel we have abandoned the countryside under pressure of political correctness."

According to Charles Nunnely, the Trust's chairman, Font has not responded to an overture sent to them from head office three weeks ago. "We've asked them to meet us, to discuss the concerns they have other than fox-hunting, but they don't appear to be interested," he says.

He points out that, with 600,000 acres of land, 565 miles of coastline and 2.5 million members, the Trust has grown into a huge organisation. "A hundred years ago, the whole purpose was to allow the population access to the countryside, and that's exactly what we're doing today. When people say the Trust has lost touch with the countryside, all they mean is that we're doing one or two things some landowners don't like."

Mr Nunnely has no doubt that the present unrest "all stems from the bitterness caused by the stag-hunting issue". This is certainly true, but the question is, how far has the bitterness spread, and how can it be assuaged? That doughty campaigner, Baroness Mallalieu reckons that "the Trust thought the hunting issue would simply go away. Well, it hasn't. It's festering, and getting worse all the time."

Perhaps the most constructive suggestion has come from Clare McLaren-Throckmorton, whose family has lived at Coughton Court, near Alcester, for more than 500 years. The house now belongs to the Trust, but she has a lease of it, and manages it on their behalf.

Although a lifelong supporter, she confesses that she was shaken when the Trust reneged on its agreement with Sir Richard Acland, and she has asked for reassurance that in future donors' wishes will be respected, before she leaves the Trust the contents of Coughton. She also hopes that "big decisions, which have a huge knock-on effect, will be taken much more carefully and after more consultation." Her suggestion is that, because times have changed, the millennium should be the occasion for the Trust to make a fundamental reassessment of its role and principles.

NATURE NOTE

IN THIS warm, wet weather, thousands of gardeners are no doubt being irritated by the proliferation of blackfly on their broad beans; but probably few of them realise what phenomenal powers of reproduction the aphids possess. One female, settling on a beanstalk, can give birth parthenogenetically (without being fertilised by a male) to 50 wingless offspring. Seven days later, each of those 50 is capable of breeding, and those 50 in a single year the insects will go through about 18 generations.

Dr Richard Harrington, an entomologist at the Institute for

Arable Crops Research at Rothamstead, has calculated that if they all survived, we would end up with the entire surface of the earth covered by blackfly to a depth of 150 kilometres. Fortunately, a high proportion of the aphids die before they can breed.

There are more than 500 species of aphids in Britain, but last week suction traps in Hertfordshire caught a type hitherto reported only in southern Italy. Global warming? A side-effect of El Niño? For the moment, no one can tell.

DUFF HART-DAVIS

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEKEND

BADGER-FACE, silver-spangled hamburgers and many more inhabitants of Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire will meet next week for the Three Counties Show at Malvern, an annual agricultural show that includes displays of dog agility, ladies' side-saddle riding, sheep-shearing and a pig of the year competition. Abattoir escapes the Tamworth Two (Butch and Sundance) will be making guest appearances - and spreading subversion among competitors?

The three Counties Show 1998 is at the Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire, 16-18 June, from 8am. Adults £11, children £5 (01664 584900; www.threecounties.co.uk)

SALLY KINDBERG



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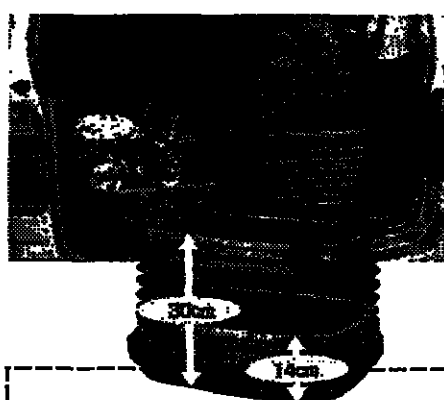
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Keeping Eastern promises



Classic and simple - antique furniture at Snap Dragon

WALK DOWN any British high street this summer and you will see just how popular eastern-style home accessories have become. From House of Fraser to Habitat and The Conran Shop, the volume and diversity of eastern goods is striking. If, however, you are looking for something really individual, an item you'll definitely want to keep when the latest trend has been replaced, there is one place that certainly deserves a visit.

Hurrying into Snap Dragon off a rainy summer street in south west London, I felt as if I was stumbling into the shelter of a tropical forest. Solid chunky tables seemed to emerge from the floor. Like tangled shrubs, ceremonial food boxes and cabbage baskets lolled about the room and, strewn on top of a Chinese day bed, were antique wooden baskets and smooth, dark storage pots. Simple bowls in delicate shades of green looked as if they were curled up like spring leaves and bamboo-carrying baskets hung overhead like a canopy.

There is something intrinsically pleasing about the rich, warm colours, soft textures and smooth, almost glassy, shapes of this furniture, and proprietor Leonie Lee-Whittle has built up a successful business on the premise that many people share this taste. She points out that she only stocks goods that she likes and that the furniture on sale is not representative of all Chinese styles.

Rhiannon Batten finds a purveyor of quality oriental home accessories

Leonie grew up in Hong Kong where she developed a childhood hobby of rummaging through abandoned local villages picking up an old lantern here or a crumbling desk there. These formed the basis of a collection when she later returned to the country as a stockbroker. Becoming dissatisfied with the financial world, she eventually decided to start up her own business - learning about Chinese furniture from museums in Taiwan and California, and spending hours at the V&A. From time spent in China, meeting people and making contacts, she came to an arrangement with one particular Chinese family. Having explained what she wanted, and how much she was prepared to pay for it, she let them get on with finding the goods for her business while she travelled back and forth, at first selling mainly to the States. That was six years ago and her business has grown enormously. Snap Dragon has been open for al-

most two years and, keen to maintain direct links between her customers and China, Leonie always likes to talk to her clients - sometimes visiting their homes to get a feel for what they are looking for - before a visit to the East.

The shop's staff are fully briefed in the history of the furniture, and each piece for sale has a little label explaining its background. A set of four screen doors are displayed with a note that lattice-work panels helps the air circulate, even though the doors are dividing up the room. And certainly, from rice buckets to dowry cabinets, narrow console tables or an 18th-century day bed converted into a coffee table, these are useful, practical things.

However, such pieces do come at a price. An antique herbal medicine chest with stoneware ink lettering on each tiny drawer is currently on sale for £1,500; and the lattice-work panels - a set of four - are £2,500.

As well as antiques, pieces can be made or adapted to order. In the shop, shimmering red and gold cushions, silk lampshades and giant yellow incense sticks highlight the anubergine colours and polished surfaces of the antiques. This is a place to come back to again and again - it's not just a passing trend but a shop offering classic simplicity.

Snap Dragon, 247 Fulham Road, London SW3 6ET (0171-376 8889).



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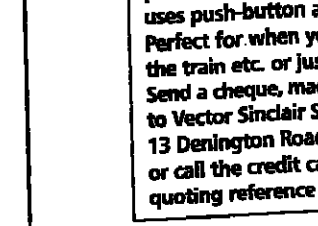
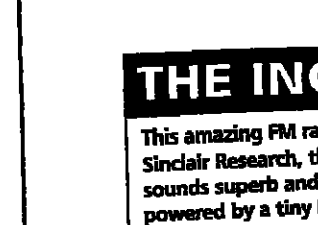
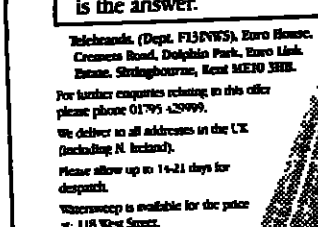
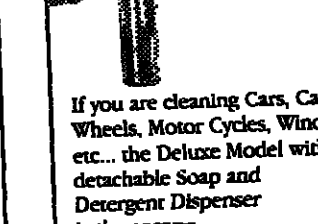
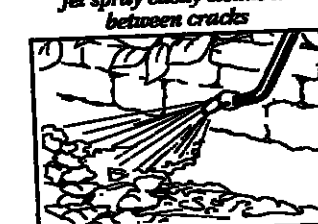
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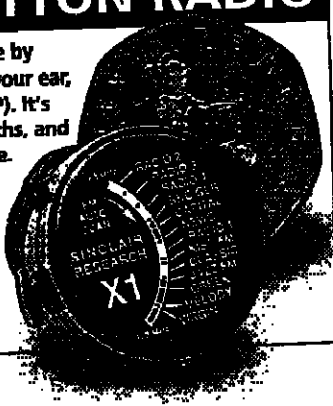
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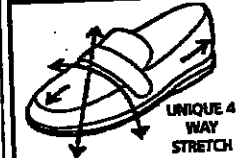
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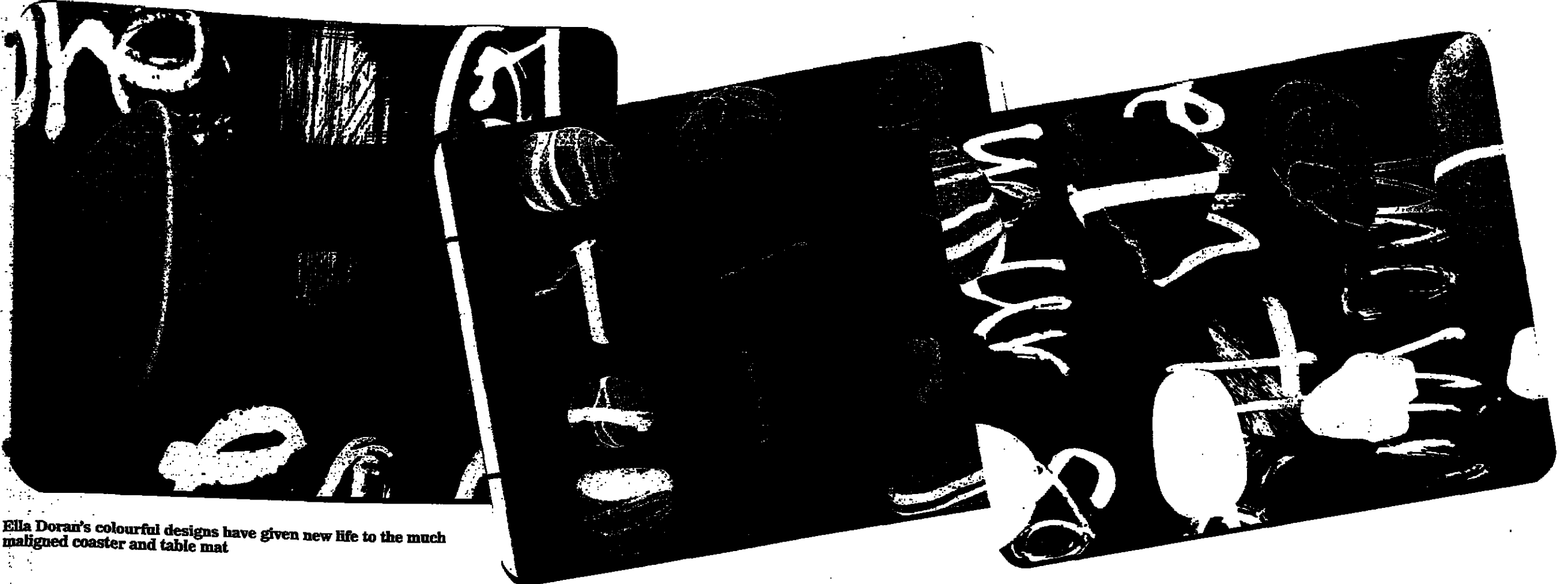
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Ella Doran's colourful designs have given new life to the much maligned coaster and table mat

Coaster to coaster

Table mats have long been icons of tableware naffness, but designer Ella Doran's eye for striking, off-the-wall imagery is transforming them into an essential menu item for any stylish dinner party. By Charlotte Packer

IF YOU believe coasters are irredeemably naff, and you'd rather have your table tops garlanded with wine rings than succumb to the suburban horror of surface protection, then you're a little behind the times. All those awful images of the castles of England, framed in burgundy borders, are long gone in the world of tableware.

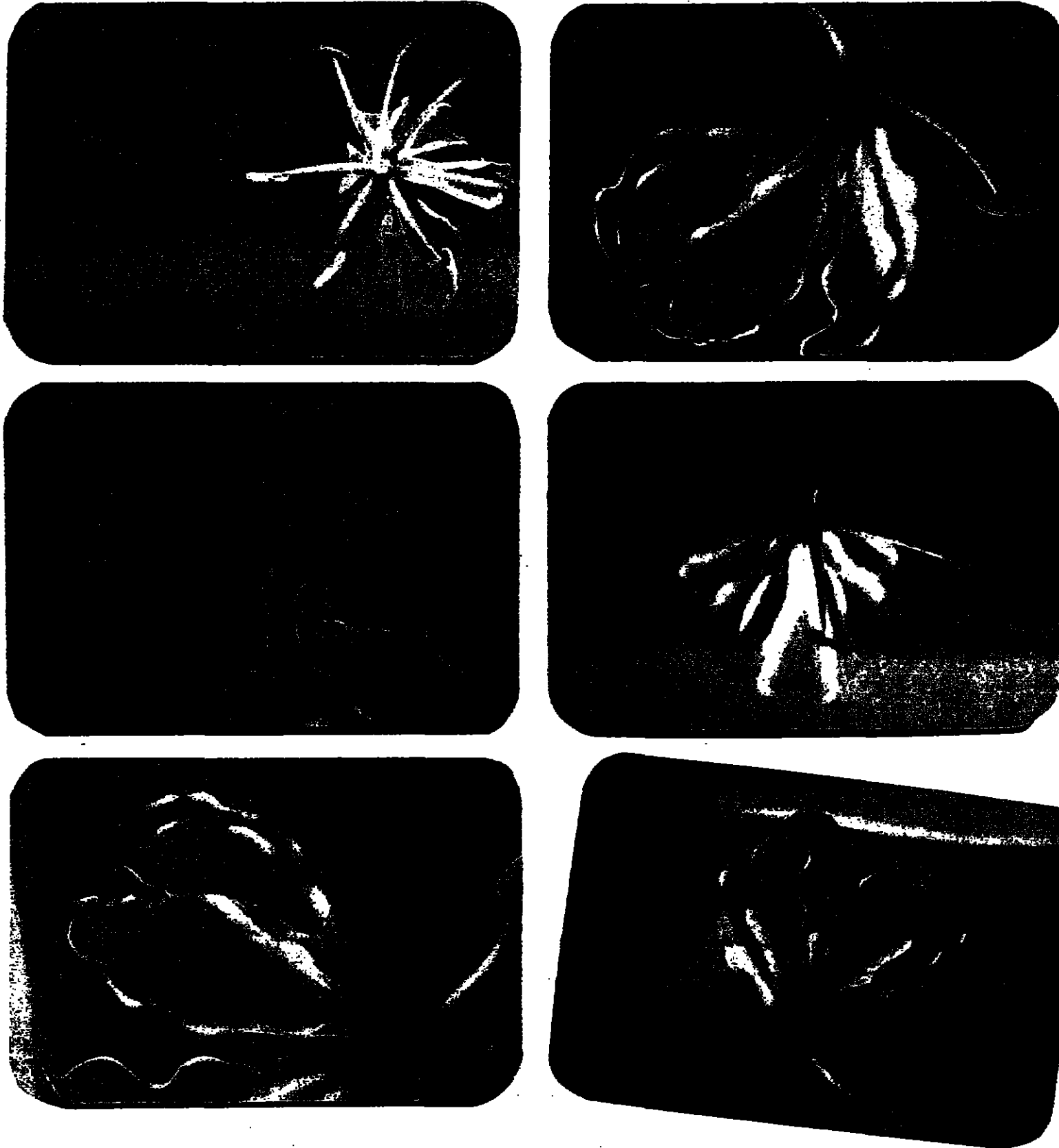
The coaster and its equally unhappy cousin, the table mat, have finally come of age, and Ella Doran is the person responsible for their renaissance. Her witty and striking designs, which include photographs of peeling posters on New York buildings and luscious close-ups of lilies and roses, have catapulted table mats onto the pages of the glossy interior and style magazines, and back into our lives.

It is Doran's ability to create powerful images from quirky and unexpected details which has not only revitalised the humble coaster but ensured her success as a designer. Joanna Dodsworth, curator of The Bodleian Library, was so impressed by her eye for the unusual that she commissioned Doran to work on a series of postcards for the Impressions of The Bodleian project. "We asked her to spend a couple of days at the library photographing things that caught her attention, textures and colours, aspects of a book one wouldn't normally think about." Other recent collaborations include a commission for a wall feature for a bar in Farringdon, and a very appropriate link up with Absolut Vodka, for whom she has designed a limited edition set of interlocking coasters featuring the iconic bottle. "I'm very partial to vodka," admits Doran, "so it was a great job!"

Having graduated from art school with a degree in printed textiles, Doran imagined her future lay in bed linen, blinds and other soft furnishings. Had anyone suggested that her career would take off with coasters, she would have laughed out loud; in fact, she does laugh out loud - with embarrassment at it all. "It does feel a little odd to admit, when people ask, that I make coasters and table mats for a living."

She is also amused by the fact that she has forged a career based on her photography, a skill she developed initially as a means of gathering inspiration for her textiles. Wherever she travelled her camera went too, and the shots that came back were not the usual tourist snaps of faces and places, but little details that captured the essence of a place or served as *ouides-memoires* for future designs.

"It is strange that I am now recognised for these photographs, and yet I'm sure that if I'd trained as a photographer, I wouldn't have come this far." One image of fiery red and yellow leaves arranged



across the bright blue pages of an open notebook has become one of her best selling designs and, in a neat twist, dates back to the six months she spent in Kenya trying to figure out what she wanted to do with her life.

On her return to the UK, Doran held an open studio show with a friend. "I had been making cushions and bed linen, so we created a bedroom scene and called the show *La La Soloma*, which is Swahili for sweet dreams. On a table in a corner, I displayed a few coasters I'd had made up at a photo shop as a joke." The show sold out, everything going, including the coasters.

Following this, Doran drew up her first business plan and applied to The Prince's Youth Business Trust and the East London Business Centre, both of whom came up with cash. "Eighty per cent of that plan was about printed blinds. The coasters were only there because a friend suggested them as a means of generating revenue."

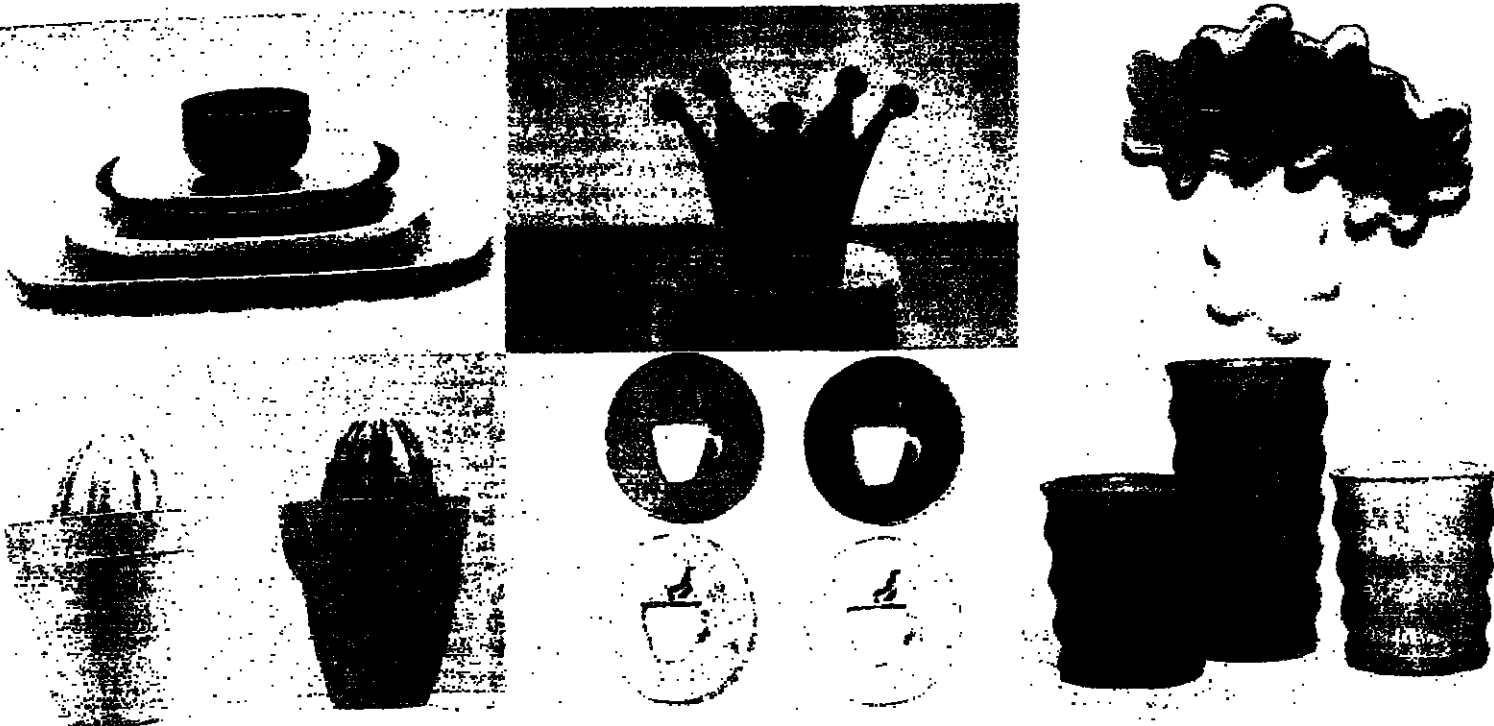
But the demand for her coasters (£19.50 for a set of six, mats £29.50 for set and later trays from £20.50), has been such that only now, with two part-time assistants and another couple of outworkers, can she turn her attention to the blinds, the first of which has just arrived in the studio. It's a one-off commission designed for a kitchen, featuring enlarged versions of the seed packets for runner beans and cabbages on her *Legume* collection of mats. "That's where I really want things to go next," she explains. "Lots of individual projects for interiors. I hope to have a range of designs people can choose from and adapt in whatever way they wish." She has already started production on a china collection, elegant bowl-shaped cups with crispy stones lurking in their depths which are an extension of *Stones*, a range of coasters bearing photographs of pebbles set against black and white text and her studio floor.

It is now just two and a half years since her first coaster went into production and Doran seems to have conquered the world: her trays are snapped up by design conscious Americans at *Ad Hoc* in New York, and the coasters and mats grace the smartest homes from Notting Hill to Los Angeles and soon, following a frenetic week doing deals with buyers in Tokyo, the Japanese will be sipping their Sapporo with an Ella Doran coaster to hand.

Contact Ella Doran, 1 Tenter Ground, London E1 7NH (0171 375 1466). Her coasters are also available by mailorder from Purves & Purves, 80-81 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9HD. Call 0171 580 8223. The Bodleian Library 01865 277 216/091 or www.bodle.ox.ac.uk/arcade

ON THE TABLE

This summer retro ceramics, kitsch plastic tumblers and funky plywood coasters will be seen on the best dressed tables



Clockwise from top left: Feldspar bowl, £1.90, and plates, from £1.90, IKEA (phone 0181-208 5607 for nearest store); Egg cup, £2.50 for a set of four; Purves & Purves, 80-81 Tottenham Court Road, London, W1P 9HD (0171-580 8223) mail order; Frosted flower coasters, £2.50 each, The Pier, 0171-814 5004 for mail order and enquiries; Acrylic wave hiball, £2.95, and tumblers, £2.50, The Pier, as above; Plywood coasters with coffee cup cut-outs, £3.50 each, Purves & Purves, as above; Cactus juicer, £10, Purves & Purves as above. Right: Yellow Delire jug, £15, Habitat, for nearest store, 0645 334433



So farewell then, El Niño

The continent-sized pool of warm water in the Pacific, which has been turning climates upside down, is finally fading away, but nobody knows what will follow it

THE PACIFIC Ocean is finally getting back to normal. That vast pool of warm water known as El Niño has all but faded away, though many parts of the world are still feeling its effects. And in parts of the world where they are not fighting the forest fires that follow El Niño-related drought, or the mudslides that follow El Niño-related storms, they wait in trepidation to see what will happen next.

Sometimes El Niño is followed by his little sister, La Niña, which produces more or less the opposite effects. But sometimes El is an only child and the weather systems of the world revert to normal. We just don't know.

The trouble is that the world's weather involves such a complex interaction between air and water currents operating on different time-scales. At the simplest level, we have the sun heating the earth and the earth giving off its heat to warm the air. (There is comparatively little direct heating of the air by the sun - which explains why the tops of mountains are such cold places, even though they are nearer the sun.) Equatorial areas of the earth receive more solar energy than polar areas, which leads to warmer air near the equator and colder at the poles. Warm air rises, cold air descends, and that accounts for one aspect of the continuous winds that circle the earth. The other main aspect is the earth's rotation, which provides a continuous slow-stirring effect.

Meanwhile, there is the warming and cooling effect of night and day to take into account, and then there is the problem of the earth taking such a long time to radiate its stored heat.



WILLIAM HARTSTON

Have you ever wondered why the shortest day (when we receive the least heat from the sun) is in December, but the coldest day does not generally happen until February? It's because the earth is such a good storage heater. In December, it's still living off the heat it collected in summer. It's only when that is all used up that we feel really cold.

Then - and here we're finally catching up with El Niño again - there is the differential heat storage capacity of the oceans and the land. While the land may retain heat for a month or so, the oceans can do so for twice as long. And they can move it around in a way that the earth cannot.

The winds spread the warmth around at one rate, the earth radiates it at another, and the oceans at a third. No wonder it's all too complicated to predict. And what makes it even worse, is the motion of water in the oceans, not just from one location on



Coping with flooding in Indonesia caused by El Niño's torrential rains

Scott Dalton/AP

the surface to another, but between different depths. Cold water sinks and warm water rises at a far slower rate than anything we have yet mentioned, and somewhere in all these processes lies the explanation of why, every five years or so, a great pool of warm water gathers unexpectedly in the Pacific and throws the world's weather into turmoil.

And as it passes, the world counts the cost: rebuilding after El Niño will cost Ecuador \$2bn; Peru will spend \$627m just to rebuild highways, bridges, homes and schools destroyed by floods and mud slides; Brazil's grain production has been cut by half, and some 10 million people are expected to go hungry; 10 per cent of Fiji's population will need government aid for up to

a year to avert starvation and destitution. The roll of disaster goes on and on: from New Zealand we learn that 90 per cent of chicks of the world's rarest penguin species will starve to death because the El Niño-related drought has led to a scarcity of the yellow-eyed penguin's main food source: Washington anticipates an explosion of mosquito numbers; Los Angeles is bracing itself

for an invasion of rats and killer bees. All because of El Niño.

Most momentous of all, last month, scientists calculated that at its peak, El Niño was responsible for a slowing of the earth's rotation by 800 microseconds. Well, at least that gives scientists a fraction of a second more to see if they can predict when this climate destroyer will be back again.

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

Three wedding stories, a happy jogger, unhappy hookers and some sausages

South Carolina, US

TWENTY YEARS ago, twin brothers Guy and Gilles Leclerc made a pact: after both had fallen for the same girl while on holiday, they agreed that in future they would date only twins. Last weekend, in Lablachère, France, their agreement reached its natural consequence as they married Joëlle and Florence Banani whom they met and courted thanks to a web site for French twins. The Leclerc brothers, aged 36, are both professors of biology at the University of South Carolina.

Minneapolis, US

DAVE WEINLICK, 28, will marry today, but he is still not sure who his bride will be. Weinlick, an anthropology student at the University of Minnesota, said that he had become so tired of people asking him when he was going to get married that he set a date - 13 June 1998 - and enlisted a committee to select a bride for him. Pete Johansson, a roommate of the groom, said that there is a confirmed list of about 40 candidates, but the number is expected to grow as local radio stations bus in women from other areas. But their chances look slim: "If you don't know Dave or anyone else there you probably won't get picked," Johansson said.

New York, US

ACCORDING to the Moët & Chandon Matrimonial Matrix, the cost of a top-of-the-range June wedding with 150 guests in New York has risen 2.6 per cent since last year. The cost of champagne itself is up by 4.1 per cent, though the price of a Priscilla of Boston wedding dress and wedding bands from Van Cleef and Arpels has remained the same.

Belarus

"THERE is no shortage of sausage in Belarus and there won't be," Belarusian president Alexander Lukashenko said on Thursday. The president has ordered a meat processing factory to boost production of cheap sausages to keep up with increased demand.

Norway

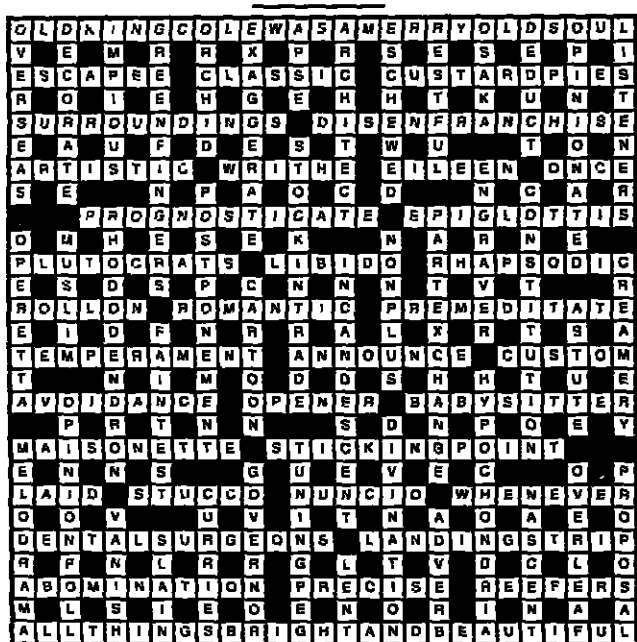
A NORWEGIAN prisoner who had been granted special privileges, including going jogging with the guards, took advantage of them on Thursday as their morning jog reached its end at a recreation area outside the prison in the town of Bodø. Leaving the guards panting, the prisoner increased his pace and ran away.

Moldova

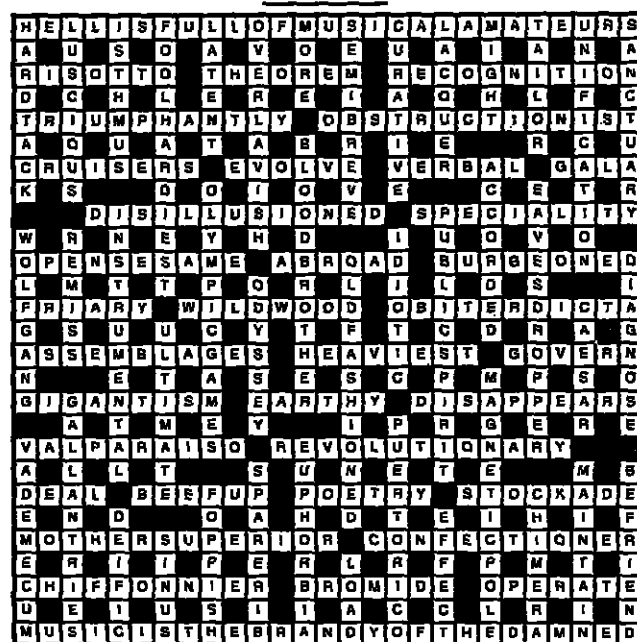
THE MOLDOVAN parliament passed a law on Tuesday making prostitution a crime and banning advertisements by prostitutes.

GAMES AND JUMBO CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

CONCISE



CRYPTIC



Winners

Cryptic winner:
M Hartley, Blackburn;

Cryptic runners-up:
A Whitley, London E3;
M Wane, Wiltshire;
M Haslford, London SE10;
D Bateman, Colchester;
H Ougham, Aberystwyth.

Concise winner:
G Speake, Combe.

Concise runners-up:
D Martin, Witham;
P Harmer, London NW7;
D Hiles, Easingwold;
C Harding, London NW3;
F Buckenham, London SW6.

PANDORA MELLY GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Raymond Blanc, 48, patron, Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons restaurant.

MY FREE time is a bit of a luxury, but one thing that I still do, is play tennis. I must say I've got a most wondrous style. I'm all made of style, as I had one of the very best teachers. My service is definitely... well look at me, you say: "Wow, he's quite something, that guy". And of course you see the ball travelling at 25 miles an hour. OK maybe into the net, and yet I remain to be the champion of Le Manoir in the inter-staff competition every year.

They know that as a Frenchman, and the boss, I cannot contemplate losing, so for the last ten years, apart from last year, I've won, because nobody dares to win against me for fear of retribution.

In 1997, one very unruly individual, bald and so on, completely smashed me. I lost the cup of Le Manoir, and I'm not any more the champion, isn't it terrible?

So I'm going to practise hard this summer, while given time. That is really one

of my favourite games, because it's so easy to jump into a court and take a couple of hours to have fun.

One game I've discovered lately is *Loser Quest*. You go into caves and you have a gun, and a harness which shows where you've been hit. Obviously I'm a pretty lousy shot. I discovered that when my son completely killed me about ten times over.

My other game is a leisurely game of French play: *Pétanque*. Again we have a *concours* every year, and I usually do find I reach the final. It is a lovely game because of the pats and the Ricard. It is very much of the south of France, and of course you get slightly drunk, but who cares?

Le Manoir has, thanks to recent renovations, now been transformed into a window of contemporary style. Bookings: 01844-278881 - or you may prefer to recreate its gastronomic splendour at home in autumn, when Blanc Vite will be published by Headline.

CHESS: WILLIAM HARTSTON

THIS WEEKEND I shall be watching the World Cup - the World Chess Cup at the Devonshire Inn in Sticklepath, near Okehampton, Devon. With six years' experience of world-class chess events behind them, including one world team championship contested by local pub teams each representing a different nation, and six Devonshire International Tournaments, the time was ripe, in the opinion of the landlord John Verner-Jeffreys, to host a World Cup.

Considerable crowds are expected this afternoon to see the first appearance of the latest version of *Aquarius*, the chess computer powered by the water mill at the Finch Foundry next door to the Inn. Last year, *Aquarius* - the world's first intelligent clepsydra - dried out during an unusually sunny spell and by the time it had been rebooted, by men in pedaloes ferrying to and fro with buckets of water, it was adjudged to have overstepped the time limit.

This time, however, they believe the upgraded Rainbows 98 software system is truly weatherproof. "It has a 4.3 gigagallon, 8-speed parallel aqueduct Reservoir Added Memory," Mr Verner-Jeffreys explained, "with a sheep-methane-powered gas turbine back-up in case of drought."

The break-through in design occurred, he said, when research revealed that 95 per cent of the methane produced by a sheep came from belches. "We'd been using the wrong disc-drive, as it were," he said.

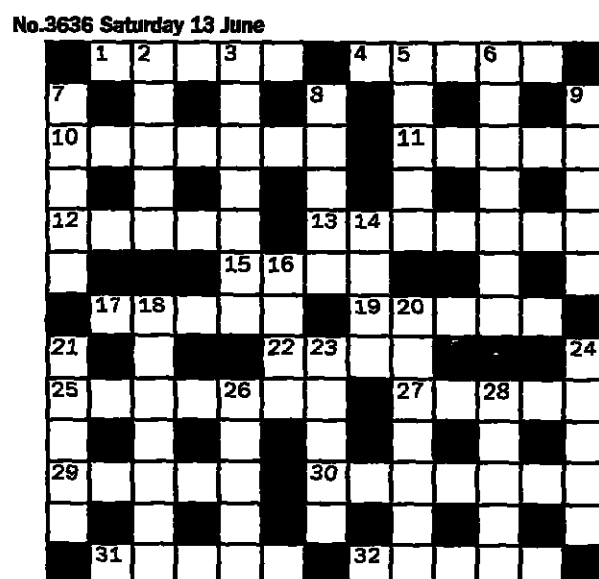
If the weather forecast for this weekend is correct, sheep-power will be unnecessary, but a flock is on standby if necessary. And what, I asked, if it gets clogged up with water spiders and dragonflies as it did in 1998? "No problem," said Mr Verner-Jeffreys with a knowing wink as he pointed to the fine metal grid sunk deep into the water. "Millennium bug-filter."

And if you think that sounds a little far-fetched, here's a game from an equally futuristic contest currently being played in Leon, Spain. Each man has an hour for all his moves, but may call on the assistance of either of two top-of-the-range computer programs. Kasparov lost the first game, but in the second adopted the sort of chess that computers don't understand. At the end, White's threat of 37.Rc7 cannot satisfactorily be met.

White: Garry Kasparov
Black: Veselin Topalov
Leon 1998

1 d4 Nf6 19 Rfc1 Qa5
2 Nf3 g6 20 a3 a6
3 c4 Bg7 21 Bd4 Bf8
4 g3 0-0 22 e3 Be8
5 Bg2 c6 23 Qd2 Qd8
6 Ne5 d5 24 Bf1 Rc7
7 cxd5 cxd5 25 Qb2 Rc6
8 Ne5 e6 26 Na4 Rxc1
9 0-0 Nfd7 27 Rxc1 Bc6
10 f4 Nc5 28 Ne5 Qe8
11 Be3 f6 29 a4 a5
12 Nf3 f5 30 Qc3 Q7
13 Ne5 Nb6 31 Bb5 Bxb5
14 b3 Bd7 32 axb5 b6
15 Qd3 Nc8 33 Na4 Bc8
16 Bc1 Nxe5 34 Qxc8+ Rxc8
17 dxe5 Rf7 35 Rxc8+ Kh7
18 Be3 Bc6 36 b6 resigns

CONCISE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Pretend (5)
- 4 Brownish-grey colour (5)
- 10 Give shelter to (7)
- 11 Cancel (5)
- 12 Italian city (5)
- 13 Unpleasantly (7)
- 15 Exhort (4)
- 17 Incline (5)
- 19 Express a view (5)
- 22 Form of rash (4)
- 25 Come uninvited (7)
- 27 Own up to (5)
- 29 Deserve (5)
- 30 Whip (7)
- 31 Answer charge in court (5)
- 32 Special ability (5)

DOWN

- 2 Mistake (5)
- 3 Adult (5-2)
- 5 Gather (5)
- 6 Regular payment to retired person (7)
- 7 First mover in chess (5)
- 8 Incorrect (5)
- 9 Dramatic pieces (5)
- 14 Long period (4)
- 16 Understood (4)
- 18 Proxic (7)
- 20 Bird (7)
- 21 Greek letter (5)
- 23 Stop (5)
- 24 Aquatic animal (5)
- 26 Right-wing extremist (5)
- 28 Wall painting (5)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 5 Jewel, 8 Porpoise (Dual-purpose), 9 Space, 10 Rest-free, 11 Trump, 14 Add, 16 Affair, 17 Abused, 18 Min, 20 Lease, 24 A la carte, 25 State, 26 Slightly, 27 Idiom. DOWN: 1 Opera, 2 Crane, 3 Comfy, 4 Ascend, 6 Emporium, 7 Encased, 12 Affected, 13 Falsotto, 14 Arm, 15 Dan, 19 Advers, 21 Scrap, 23 Crave, 25 Beryl.

BRIDGE: ALAN HIRON

East-West game; dealer East	
North	
♠ J 10 7 4	
♥ A 7	
♦ K Q 10 7	
♣ A J 5	
South	
♠ A K Q 6 3	
♥ 9 8 5	
♦ 5 2	
♣ 7 6 3	

FIRST OF all I shall describe how South went down in his spade game on this deal and then invite you to find three other lines of play that would have succeeded.

East opened One Heart. South over-called with One Spade and, after West had passed, North bid Two Hearts - the so-called "unassuming cue-bid". He had a lot in reserve, of course, and when South showed a minimum with Two Spades, he went on to game.

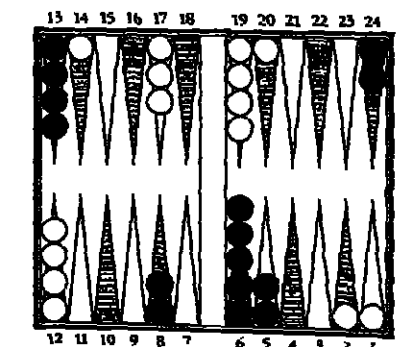
West led ♠ 2 against Four Spades and declarer won the second round. He came to hand with a trump and led a diamond to the king and ace. East returned a trump and, after ruffing his third heart, South played off two more rounds of trumps, then looked for a second trick in diamonds by leading low to the queen and ruffing ♠ 7. The jack did not fall and that left South a trick short.

And the more successful lines? (1) Finessing ♠ 10 instead of trying to ruff out the jack. The finesse loses, but ♠ Q 7 now provides two club discards when the nine falls. (2) Play ♠ Q on the second round of the suit, but follow with ♠ 10 to pin West's now bare nine. (3)

Perhaps the most elegant - on winning East's trump return, cash ♠ Q, ruff a diamond, ruff a heart, cash ♠ A, and ruff the last diamond.

This leaves dummy with ♠ J ♠ J 5 and declarer with ♠ Q ♠ 7 6 and now, however the defenders manage the suit, an exit with a low club gives South two of the last three tricks.

BACKGAMMON: CHRIS BRAY



WE LEFT our game last week with White (Frank Frigo) to play 22 in the position above. Despite the attractions of making the 4-pt, White should not leave a blot on his 5-pt. Thus three of the 2s should be played 11/9/7/5. The final 2 is best played 23/21, seeking to establish a good anchor in Black's board. Frigo, however, chose 13/11.

Black (Peter Thomsen) rolled 62 and played 13/5. While this may look nice and leave no blots, it does nothing to improve his position. He should try 24/16. Although this leaves White a lot of shots he will not always hit and if Black can escape a man he will have significantly improved his position.

White rolled 42 and made his 4-point with 3/4, 6/4. Black rolled 62 again and now correctly ran out with 24/16. The problem is that this time White's board is that much stronger and a hit that much more dangerous. White rolled 64 and played 24/18, 13/9. Note that he could have played 11/5 with the 6 but that is the bar-point if possible. Also, when advancing a man from his opponent's home board, it is usually less risky when he is on the bar.

Black now rolled 55 and stayed on the bar. Frigo promptly doubled and Thomsen just as quickly passed. This is an excellent early game double. White has the better board and one of Black's men on the bar. He has a variety of winning game plans. Black, despite having made his own 5-point, must pass this one. The risk of losing a gammon is high and he has no real threats of his own.

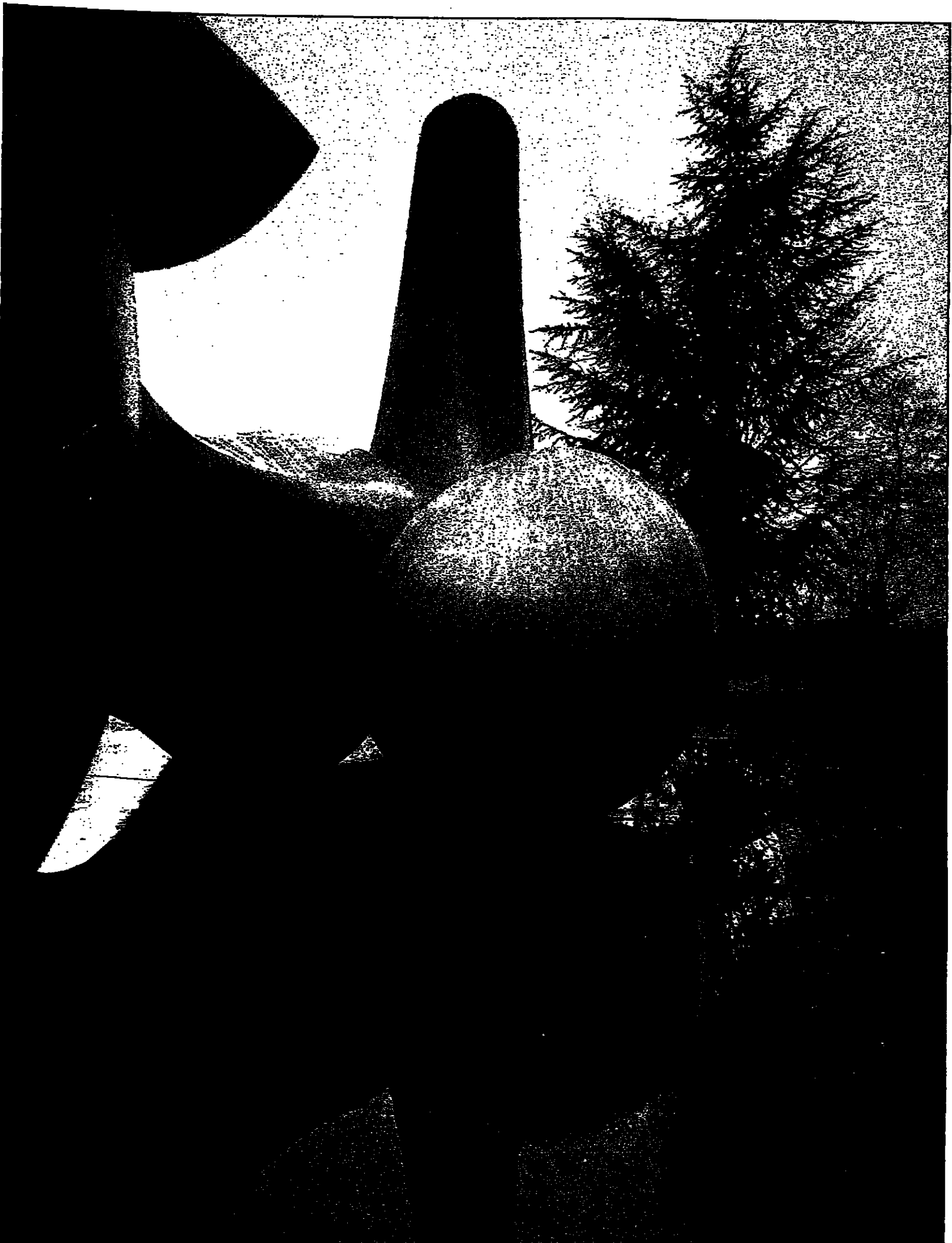
Even in this seven move game there were a lot of difficult playing decisions. It is the ability to make the positions which separates the great players from the merely good ones.

TRAVEL

Bronze Age revisited



The sculptor
Henry Moore
was born 100
years ago. His
centenary is
being marked
in the quiet
Hertfordshire
village where
he lived.
By Martin
Thompson



Above and left, the Henry Moore Foundation Gardens at Perry Green. Top left, 'Mother and Child'

Brian Harris

NOTTERING THROUGH Perry Green, near Bishops Cleeve, you could easily miss it. Tucked away behind the manicured village green is the lair of the late Henry Moore, the gentle giant of British 20th-century art, born a century ago to a miner's family in Castleford, Yorkshire. The rugged Yorkshire landscape may have inspired much of his art, yet it was in the cosy farmlands of the Home Counties that Moore elected to spend a great deal of his working life.

Although it does not trumpet its existence, Henry Moore's southern Bedford is open to visitors under the auspices of a charitable foundation set up by the artist himself in his final years. Visitor numbers have increased every year, but for art lovers and the simply curious, Perry Green remains one of southern England's best kept secrets.

The Henry Moore Foundation is based round the 15th-century house and 70 acres of grounds where the sculptor lived and worked for four decades with his Russian wife Irina. The house is not open to the public, but visitors to the estate can see Moore's workshops and gardens with a special display of 29 sculptures. The layout of the estate has been kept much as it was during the artist's lifetime. Yet this is no passive memorial. Two of Moore's assistants are still working away repairing vandalised public commissions, and preparing other pieces for exhibitions the world over.

In an age before artists became self-publicists, Moore remained a modest, enigmatic figure beavering away quietly behind the ancient Hertfordshire hedges. Today, such an atmosphere is retained by allowing the public to view Moore's house and works while honouring his sense of privacy. Ninety-minute tours of the studios and grounds give a fascinating insight into the artist's ideas and working methods. These tours are available by appointment between April and mid-October. However, to celebrate the sculptor's centenary year, the foundation is holding an open day on Saturday 20 June. A Yorkshire brass band will disturb the peace with impunity while visitors will be able to wander through the gardens and studios without booking.

If you elect, as I did, to book a guided tour, you will find that the foundation has honed the visitor experience to a fine art. I joined a mostly elderly group whose agility was easily a match for the two A-level art students in tow. Groups are kept small (15), with plenty of informal interaction encouraged by the volunteer guides. We began our tour with Moore's finished pieces in the gardens, then traced his great themes such as "mother and child" back to their genesis as ideas in small maquettes, now on display in Moore's studios.

From the massive we then moved right on to the minuscule. In the Bourne maquette studio we felt close to the man and his unerring feeling for natural forms. We were guided

folding drama of this, the perfect outdoor art gallery. Through a gap in the shrubbery looms the 25ft-tall bronze *Large Figure in a Shelter*. It was amazing to discover the variety of finishes you can get in bronze, from shiny smooth to craggy and weatherbeaten like Moore's face in old age. A lot of stroking and tapping went on and group members were not afraid to contribute their own spontaneous reactions: "Good Lord, they're hollow."

Our final stop was at a restored barn housing a superb sequence of tapestries based on 24 of Moore's drawings. After our guide left us, there was a chance to go solo to see the five large sculptures in the fields. As we had learnt, there was nothing neat about Moore's ele-

mental, primeval vision, and it was reassuring to discover that the estate had not been over-sanitised. Avoiding the sheep's droppings, I headed for the giant *Reclining Figure* on the hill. Surely it echoed the shape of a chicken bone I had spotted earlier on his studio shelf?

The Henry Moore Foundation, Dane Tree House, Perry Green, Much Hadham, Hertfordshire SG10 6EE (01279 843333). Open April-mid October: tours start at 2.30pm on weekdays and must be booked in advance. Weekend tours by arrangement. Adults £3; senior citizens £1.50; under 18s and students free. Open day

Saturday, 20 June, 12.30pm-5.30pm - gardens and studios open free. Refreshments and entertainments. Free bus service to/from Bishop's Cleeve station 12.30-3.30pm and 5-5.45pm.

MORE MOORE

EXHIBITIONS TO CELEBRATE THE SCULPTOR'S CENTENARY

British Museum (0171-636 1555): until 30 September. Moore's *King and Queen*, 1952-53, on loan from the Tate Gallery, can be seen along with a small group of bronze and plaster maquettes in the original display cases that he used in the Twenties, juxtaposed with ancient relics.

Wakefield Art Gallery (01924 305904). *Photographs by Henry Moore*, 1 August-13 September. This explores Moore's use of photography in developing his major works and working out the "to scale" pieces in the landscape.

Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts, Norwich (01603 593199). *Friendships and Influences*, 13 October-13 December. Here you can see how much Epstein and Brancusi inspired Moore, and note the

effects on the sculptor of his friendship with Sir Robert Sainsbury, as well as the special influence of Pre-Columbian artefacts.

National Touring Exhibition from the Hayward, *Henry Moore in Perspective*. On display will be 46 maquettes, six working models and 25 graphics, which are divided into seven groups representing key subjects and periods in Moore's career. Exhibitions will be held at: Castle Museum and Art Gallery, Nottingham (0115-915 3700): 6-19 July; Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery (0117-922 3571): 25 July-6 September; University of Northumbria, Newcastle (0191-227 4424): 12 September-25 October; Art Gallery and Museum, Brighton (01273 292650): 31 October-10 January.

CHERYL WINSPEAR

Upgrade? It's a con



SIMON CALDER

'The woman who dealt with me was most insistent that I needed a larger car'

WHETHER YOU order a pizza or a piano, you expect the supplier to deliver more or less what you requested. But in the case of car rental in America, what you ask for is rarely what you get.

The story so far: last month I pre-booked an economy-class car in Florida. At the rental depot, I was put under pressure to upgrade to a bigger model. I resisted, and was given a larger car anyway, because there was not a single small car to be found anywhere on the rental lot.

A fortnight ago, some readers revealed how free upgrades can virtually be guaranteed so long as you don't succumb to the salesperson's spiel. But not everyone has been so fortunate. Professor Anthony North, of Leeds, for example. He, like me, had pre-booked an economy-class car before flying to America.

"I presented the voucher at the crowded Hertz desk at Washington International airport and, having settled various details about insurance, I was presented with an agreement. I did not read it through and presumed that the places where I signed related to the matters I had agreed to. The car was a larger size than I had expected. I supposed that they had given me a larger car because they did not have one of the size ordered. When we arrived at our hotel and I read the agreement, I discovered that I had signed to accept an upgrade for a substantially higher charge. I had neither asked for nor been offered an upgrade."

Eventually a helpful rental clerk at the Hertz office in central Washington solved the problem by tearing up the agreement and replacing it with a new, cheaper one, while letting the Norths keep the same car.

The word "upgrade" was mentioned frequently when Geraldine Blake of west London arrived at Sanford in Florida to pick up her car. "The woman at Dollar who dealt with me was most insistent that I needed a larger car, saying that as a woman travelling on my own it would be dangerous in a small car, particularly where my luggage would be on view. I told her that I would take my chances, and so with very bad grace she handed over the keys."

When Ms Blake reached the car, she was astonished. It was huge. "I really enjoyed my two weeks in Florida, but I deeply resent initially being made to feel nervous because someone wanted to make an extra buck."

ANYONE IN Brighton on the Sunday of the last Bank Holiday weekend would have found the place packed with visitors taking advantage of the sunshine and the extraordinary "Anywhere for £1" deal offered by Thameslink Trains. The bargain resulted in huge homebound crowds at the station and left thousands stranded for the night. Leslie K Robinson sensibly left his home in the Sussex town on the day and used the deal to go walking in the Weald, but believes Thameslink deserves some praise.

"This was a brave experiment which in some ways was a spectacular success. The crowds of football proportions pouring into Brighton during the morning was a sight for sore eyes: kids in prams, mums, dads, grannies. Loads of people who probably hadn't been on a train for ages. Someone on the local BBC radio station commented that they only had to go to Disneyland to see how to manage queues."

So will Thameslink repeat the exercise?

"It's certainly something we'll consider again," says the company's Martin Walter - which will be good news for local charities, which stand to earn all the ticket money, totalling around £30,000 for the day.

ALL OF us who use trains, not to mention buses and bicycles, are getting nervous about John Prescott's White Paper on transport - whose publication has been postponed more frequently than a Virgin train. Anyone hoping for a shift towards less destructive forms of travel may be disappointed, judging by the way existing facilities are treated so risibly.

On the first working day of National Bike Week, one of the few cycle lanes in the London borough of Tower Hamlets was blocked by a council van while the driver went shopping.

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Travel Adversing also appears on pages 21, 23 & 27.

There's a clash of the Titans taking place in Stratford. Laa Laa and co are coming head to head with the Bard. By Nicola Swanborough

There are a lot of linguistic and literary references that even quite young visitors can make sense of. We took a trip around town and out to Anne Hathaway's cottage on an



Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. An inclusive ticket for all five houses costs £10 for adults, £5 for children, £9 for OAPs and students and £26 for families (two adults and up to three children). Opening times vary at each house.

Leas Leisure: Guide Friday open-top bus tours operate every 15-20 minutes. The tour lasts approximately an hour but your ticket is valid all day, allowing you to stop off *en route*. Price £8 for adults, £6.50 for OAPs and students, £2.50 for accompanied children under 12, £18.50 for families (two adults and up to four children). Under-fives go free. The tour does not include admission to any houses, though discounted tickets are available.

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The brightly painted houses and colonial Spanish forts of Puerto Plata (below), combine with coastlines little changed since the days of Columbus

John Miller

Fantasy flight to merengue land

A holiday in the Caribbean for the same price as crossing the channel? Claire Gervat jumps on a last-minute flight to the Dominican Republic and discovers a winning destination

IT DIDN'T seem possible: "Dominican Republic, 1998". Someone's finger had obviously slipped when they typed the information on to the web page. But the next day, and the next, it was still there: a return flight to the Caribbean for six nights, leaving that weekend, for little more than a round trip to Paris. The only catch seemed to be that you flew out of Gatwick and returned to Birmingham, but as far as I was concerned, that wasn't a problem. A quick check in the guidebook showed that there were plenty of reasonably priced hotels in the republic. I rang the agent back and bought a ticket.

To some people, the idea of leaving a holiday booking to the last minute is unthinkable. If you have children at school, it's almost impossible. But, if you're able to travel outside the peak months of July and August and are flexible about where you go, there are some superb bargains to be had. And with the World Cup taking over daily life for the next few weeks, you may already feel that if football really is coming home, you're getting on the first plane away. Cynical friends of mine have suggested that if a holiday or flight hasn't sold, it's because there's something wrong with it. That hasn't been my experience in the past, and it wasn't the case this time, either. The plane took off on time; I had three seats to myself; the Airtours cabin staff were charming and efficient and the food was bearable.

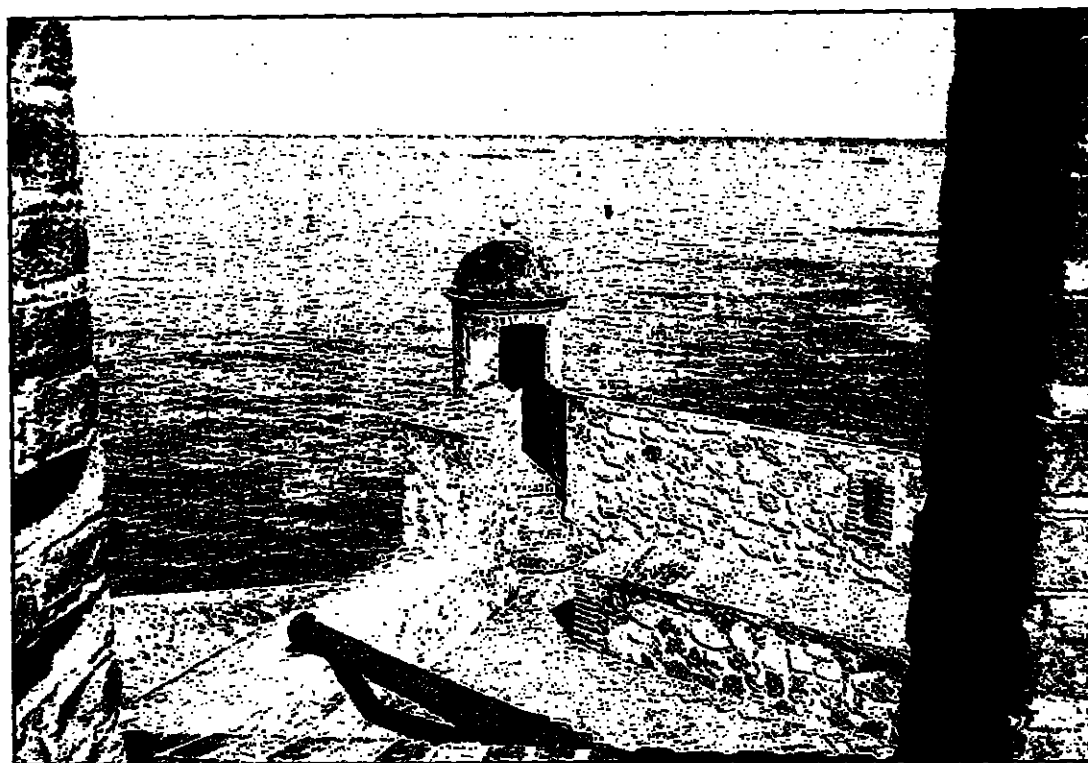
There were more surprises in store. When we landed at Puerto

Plata nearly 10 hours later, one of the reps marched up with her clipboard to ask where I was staying. "I'm flight only," I said. Yes, she replied, but that included the first night's accommodation in an all-inclusive resort in nearby Playa Dorada, and I was on coach A2.

The bus journey gave another rep the chance to introduce us to a few facts about our destination, but in my jet-lagged haze the only thing I picked up was that the Dominican Republic wasn't England. This should have been obvious, as the sun was shining and it was early summer.

The resort hotel, in a resort of resort hotels, was everything I'd expected: plastic wristbands, buffet meals, rows of sunbeds by the pool and too much to drink. It was fun, but it could have been anywhere. By next morning I was longing to escape.

The first place to check out had to be the capital, Santo Domingo. Its claim to fame is that it's the oldest city in the New World, founded more than 500 years ago, not long after Columbus first sailed here. Astonishingly, a large section of the old colonial quarter is still intact, the graceful stone houses and churches preserved as schools, art galleries and museums, and it richly deserves its Unesco designation as a World Cultural Heritage site. My own favourite haunt was Columbus's house (son Diego, rather than Christopher himself, stuffed with old furniture and ceramics, whose doors and windows are so well arranged that there's always a cooling breeze blowing through it).



After Santo Domingo, I headed north to Santiago, the republic's second city. It's not a tourist spot, just a pleasant Dominican city in the mountains with a cathedral that's been destroyed and rebuilt so often that they've almost lost count. It's one of those places you just want to wander round, admiring the little brightly painted wooden houses and stopping off for a glass of passion-fruit juice from time to time.



The Hotel Mercedes would, in estate agent talk, have suited a DIY enthusiast, but it was clean and cheap, and it had a delicious, crumbling charm. In the street outside, men sat around smoking locally made cigars and half-heartedly selling LPs with faded covers by dimly remembered American singers.

Back in Puerto Plata, I checked into the Atlantic, a small pink guest house, and went off to explore.

Amber is mined in nearby Los Haitises, and the museum devoted to the subject in Puerto Plata is tiny but beautifully arranged, each piece backlit to show off its captive insect or plant. It's also the town's only real "tourist attraction", but there are ice-cream parlours and cafés where time slides away pleasantly, and if you go to the green-and-white bar by the bus station, they run a useful side business mending phones.

From Puerto Plata, I made a day trip east by bus along the north coast to Rio San Juan and its Gri-Gri lagoon. It was early when I arrived, about 8am, so I hired a boat and driver to myself and we headed out through the mangroves. Above our heads there were vultures and ibises squawking and flapping in their nests, almost drowning out the sound of the boat's motor. The smell of damp greenery filled my nostrils.

Then suddenly we were at the mouth of the river, and chugging gently past tiny, sandy bays, along a coastline that can hardly have changed since Columbus's day.

Afterwards I stopped for a papaya milkshake in the bar by the boat stand. Outside, two car stereos were competing, with Bob Marley just about winning through. Strangely, it was the only time I heard non-Latin music in a public place. Maybe there's an unwritten rule that everyone has to hear "Jamming in the Name of the Lord" at least once on any holiday.

Back in Puerto Plata, the guest-

TRAVEL FACTS

Getting there: The best way to travel to the Dominican Republic from the UK is on a charter flight; scheduled services are indirect and expensive. Numerous tour operators offer charters, either as seat only or as part of a package holiday. These include Airtours (0541 500479); First Choice (0161-745 7000); Thomson (0990 502580). **Getting in:** British visitors must pay \$10 to Immigration on arrival. **More information:** Dominican Republic Tourist Board, 40 Crawford Street, London W1H 2BB (0171-723 0097).

house owners were determined to give me a send-off to remember. Out came the beers, on went the music. I learnt to dance the merengue, the national dance, and when I started to look weak with hunger, they sent to the takeaway for grilled chicken with pineapple vinegar sauce.

Back in the resort hotels, people would have been watching some sick entertainment and eating their buffet dinner.

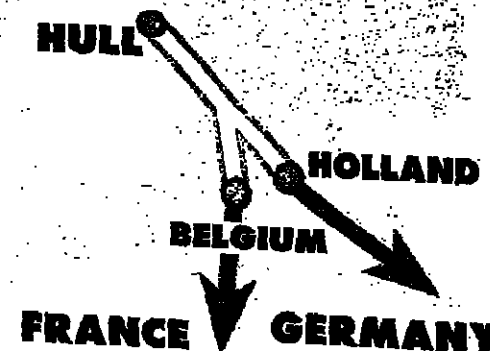
I think I know who had the better deal.



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White knuckles, red river

The adrenaline rush is what rafters are after. And on Canada's Rivière Rouge they certainly find it. Cleo Paskal climbed into a kayak for a terrifying ride over the rapids

LET'S CLEAR two things up right away. First, the Rivière Rouge is not, I repeat, not, named for the colour it becomes after an unsuccessful white-water rafting trip. And second, for some reason, river guides don't think that is a funny joke. Sadly it was the best I could come up with as my eight-person rubber raft plunged into the churning vortex of a rapid charmingly dubbed "Steep Throat".

Had I spent more time paddling and less time bantering, we might not have lost one of our crew members (Emma, an enthusiastic but unlucky 15-year-old on a school trip) on the very first stretch of white water. Live and learn. Hopefully.

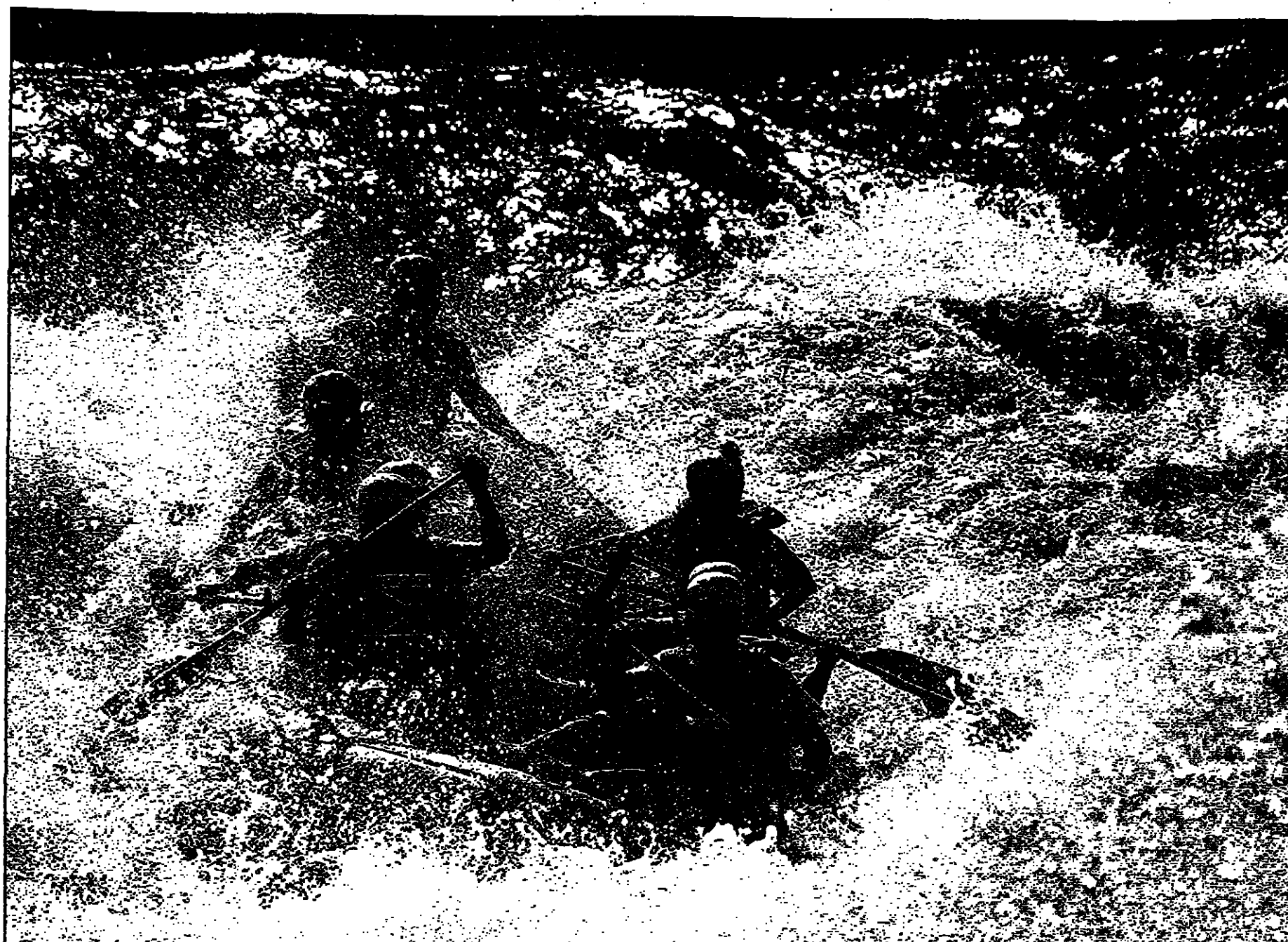
Oh it's really all quite safe, of course. Before you are let anywhere near the water, you are equipped with a helmet and lifejacket and go through a safety drill. Guides assess the river each day to decide which rapids are safe to run and which are better left to next time.

Emma was retrieved, contentedly bobbing downstream, by one of the kayakers who follow the rafts in order to pick up "swimmers", and returned to us safe and sound (and soaked). She trilled out her story, reliving every nanosecond of her white-water baptism to the admiring gasps of her school chums. As we paddled through the post-rapid calm waters I even found myself vaguely envying Emma and her "swim".

That all changed as soon as we got to the next rapid. Something primordial kicks in when a human being is faced with a surging, convulsive, aquatic pit. The world contracts to you and the patch of rubber that is keeping you from a certain watery grave. Time slows down. Directions are confused. You forget to paddle. You become alone with your terror.

And then it's all over and you go back to envying the swimmers who got to experience it all at even closer hand. Not that it ever occurred to you to jump out and join them. That cycle: terror, adrenaline rush, calm, is what white-water rafting is all about. Some spots, such as the dreaded Zambesi, offer more terror. Others, such as the gurgling canyons of Oregon, give a consistent, low-level adrenaline rush.

The Rouge's specialty is that,



Taking the plunge down the 'Steep Throat' rapids of the Rivière Rouge near Montreal. Arden London Ltd

"Oh yeah, of course, all the time. Why do you ask?" Cast, pause, reel. "Ex, no reason."

I returned to the beach. We got back into our rafts and paddled downstream, past Cal's graceful, fruitless casts and on towards the resumption of our own cycle.

Enough calm; we were due for some terror. I spent the rest of the day trying not to follow the perpetually disappearing Emma out of the boat.

I never did find out why the river is called the "Rouge". I bet Cal, still standing out on his rock, a monument to all the old-timers' knowledge, (except where the best trout holes are), knows.

British Airways and Air Canada fly between London Heathrow and Montreal.

The Rouge is half-way between Ottawa and Montreal, around an hour's drive from both. A variety of companies offer rafting on the Rouge. They all pretty much charge the same price, around £25-£35 for a full day of rafting, including a beach-side lunch and a steak dinner. They provide all the equipment. The season extends into the autumn.

Some companies offer other adrenaline-producing diversions as well, such as white-water kayaking lessons, paintball, mountain biking and rock-climbing. Most have free camping-grounds for their clients. It is a great area to unwind for a few days, if not an ideal trout-fishing river.

You need not make a reservation much in advance, so you can call and book once you arrive in Canada. I rafted with Adventures En Eau Vive. £25, and camped on their grounds free. Telephone numbers: Adventures En Eau Vive freephone in Canada: 1 800 567-6881 or direct from the UK: 001 (819) 242-6084; New World 1 800 361-5033 or 001 (819) 242-2168; Propulsion 1 800 461-3300 or 001 (514) 229-6530; W3 1 888 RAFTING or 001 (819) 242-6571.

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when not plummeting to your doom, you float gently through some of the loveliest countryside Canada has to offer.

Rolling, wooded hills hug both shores. Water-worn granite boulders stand like Henry Moore sculptures at the water's edge. The underbrush rustles with wildlife.

I had a chance to appreciate the area's beauty from non-bucking ground when the raft stopped for

lunch on the beach. Away from Emma and her coven, there was no sound but for the drone of the water and the piping of the birds. Around a bend in the river, I saw my first non-rafting person, a fly-fisherman casting from a low-lying boulder into the fast-moving current.

I clambered over the rocks and asked the man what he was fishing for. "Trout," he said, not pausing to

take a break from his physical mantra: cast, pause, reel; cast, pause, reel.

Between casts, the man, a grizzled river rat called Cal, told me a bit about the Rouge. He had lived beside the river for years. Cast, pause, reel. No, there was no official history of the region; all the stories were handed from the old-timers to the newcomers. Cast, pause, reel. According to what he'd

heard, the Europeans first settled the area when Napoleon blockaded the Balkans, cutting off the supply of wood for ships' masts. Cast, pause, reel. That, combined with starvation in Ireland and Scotland, led to Scots and Irish being sent over to log the Rouge. Cast, pause, reel. Many of them are still here. Cal himself had heard Gaelic at a regional baseball game. Cast, pause, reel. There had been

log drives down the river that were so thick, you couldn't see the water for kilometres. Cal had seen pictures. Cast, pause, reel. Logging stopped around '68 because so many men were getting killed on the river. No, that isn't why they call it the Rouge. Cast, pause, reel.

Up river, I could hear the guides calling for us to return to our boats. I asked Cal one last question. "You ever catch anything?"



Green and secret haunts of Ontario

Get off the tourist trail in southern Ontario, and find a wealth of interest in the landscape and history of Georgian Bay. By Margaret Campbell

THE NIAGARA Falls are breathtaking - and surrounded by throngs of tourists. Toronto is cosmopolitan, fast-paced - and in summer so humid and hot that you scamper for relief from one air-conditioned building to another. For a different view of southern Ontario, do what Toronto residents do, and head north to the area around Georgian Bay, known as "cottage country".

City-dwellers flock to this region for their holidays, and you don't have to travel far to understand why. Wide open skylines form a canvas for spectacular sunsets; rolling fields to woods, rivers and lakes, the spacious and rugged setting for provincial and national parks - all easily accessible from Toronto in a rented car.

Georgian Bay itself is on the south-eastern shore of Lake Huron, bordered by the Bruce Peninsula and the regions of Huronia and Muskoka. The whole area was a key inspiration for the Group of Seven: not economically muscular nations, but a band of pioneering artists who worked at the beginning of the century to bring fresh expression to the Canadian landscape.

Wasaga Beach is the closest resort to Toronto, with a beach

that runs for nine miles. You could stay here, and settle for one of the many cottages and camping areas along the lake shore. But more distant towns such as Owen Sound and Port Elgin are worth the extra travelling time, and the journey through constantly changing countryside is a treat in itself.

I travelled in the area between Barrie, on the edge of Lake Simcoe, and "the Bruce" during the Victoria Day weekend in May; one road sign announced "Welcome Home Heidi". As high summer takes hold you can go canoeing, swimming and fishing. Or wait for the beautiful foliage display in autumn, or go skiing in the Blue Mountain resorts near Collingwood and in Horseshoe Valley. Age is no barrier - a lady in Shelburne proudly informed us that she had learnt to ski at the age of 62.

There are constant reminders of the region's varied culture and history, not least in the place names: Penetanguishene, Tobermory, Wasaga Beach, Hanover. The immigrant past is remembered in pioneer graveyards at the side of main roads, gravestones collected from old farmsteads and arranged in tidy little squares or semicircles - and in murals such as the one in Durham

commemorating Archibald Hunter, founder of the town's first school and church.

Museums and festivals pay tribute to this history, covering the Native American past and more recent settlers. A rich musical tradition is reflected in the annual fiddlers' contest in Shelburne, a music festival in Owen Sound and an apical bongo contest in Durham.

For more active recreation, you can go scuba diving around the Bruce Peninsula (equipment can be hired in Tobermory), hike along the steep cliffs of the Niagara Escarpment, swim, and go boating to Flowerpot Island.

There is so much to look out for, even before reaching the Bay: the contrast between the white picket fences and verandas and the rustic wooden fences in the countryside; mailboxes at the end of driveways, carefully crafted and representing miniature tractors, ducks and houses; garage sales selling off pickling jars, old ice-skates and entire record collections; and the road signs: "Asparagus for sale", "Diet - 30lb, \$30, 30 days" and "Live worms and spawn - \$2 a dozen".

More appealing purchases can be made from produce and bakery sales at the end of farm roads, where you may find

yourself meeting Mennonites, members of a community that rejects many aspects of modern life but whose traditional needlework and baking skills are much in demand from town dwellers. Their beautifully crafted quilts and dolls are sometimes available from weekend markets.

The area is dotted with small towns, so there are plenty of places to stop off and eat. Many parks have an area for barbecues: bring your own food and charcoal, and enjoy alfresco meals the North American way.

The closest airport is Toronto, served by daily scheduled flights from Heathrow (Air Canada/British Airways), Birmingham (BA), Glasgow (AC) and Manchester (AC). In June you can pay around £350 through discount agents; in July and August £500. Charters from various UK airports are available; Margaret Campbell paid £225 return on Canada 3000 from Gatwick, through Canadian Affairs (0171-385 4400).

Accommodation choices include camping grounds, motels and cottage rental. For further information on south Ontario, including accommodation, try the Ontario Ministry of Tourism's web site at <http://www.travelinfo.ca/>

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24/TRAVEL

Oil boom meets Viking tradition

Norway's ancient city of Stavanger is enjoying a new prosperity, thanks to the North Sea. By Hugh O'Shaughnessy

WHEN NORWAY was a comparatively poor country in relation to the prosperous Scandinavian neighbours who often patronised it, every Norwegian, it was said, nursed the impossible dream of owning a Mercedes with a Swedish chauffeur.

Now the standard of living is so high in Norway because of its fantastic North Sea oil boom, that thousands of Norwegians must be able to turn that dream into reality. But, thankfully they haven't and they continue, it seems, to behave with the understated dignity that has long been their characteristic.

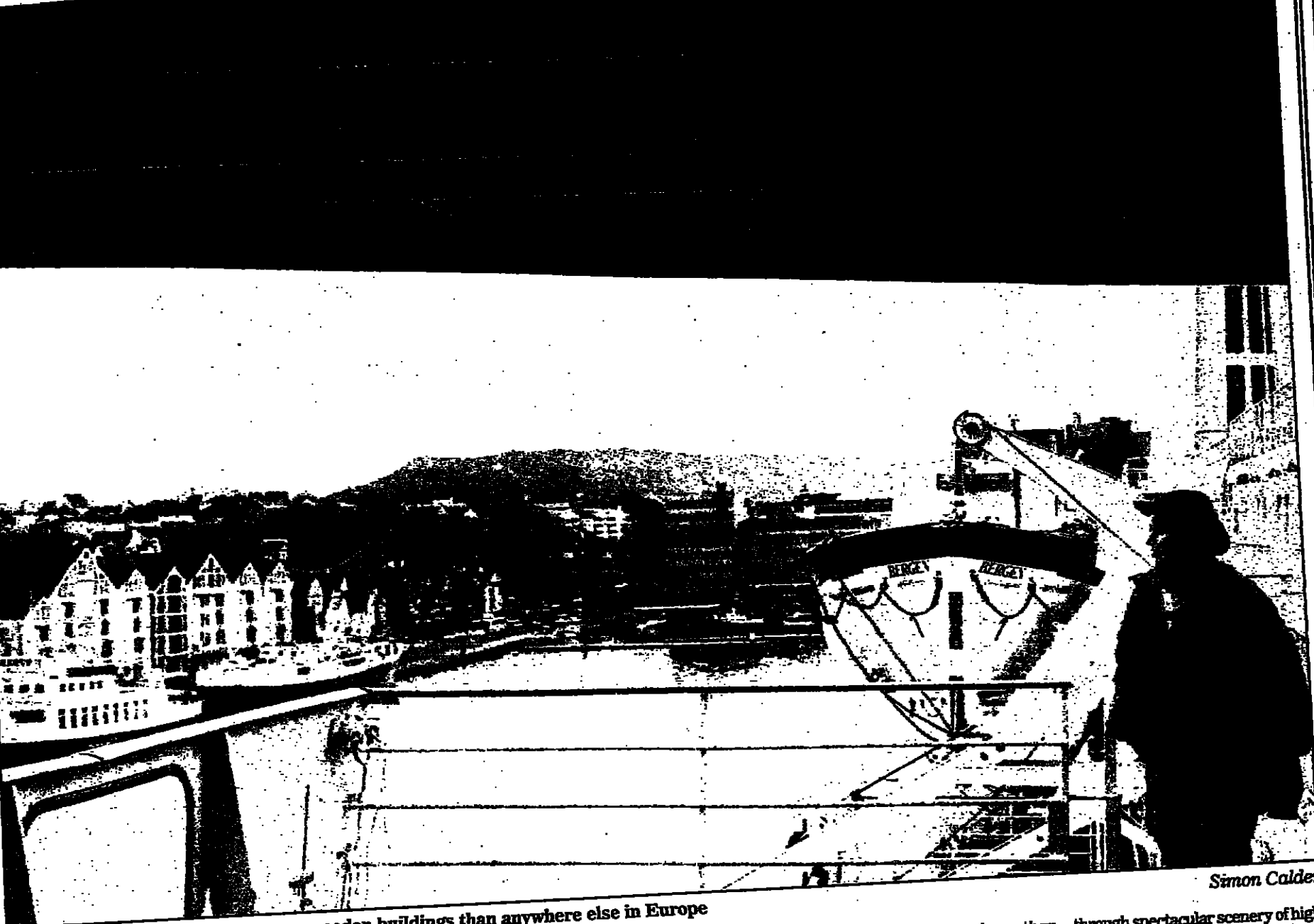
In his wryly amusing book *How to Understand and Use a Norwegian* Odd Borretzen says his compatriots are sober people who believe that God (and the King) are good things but that they should behave like proper Norwegians and not think they are anything special - after all they are no more than human.

Nowhere is better than the ancient and beautiful city of Stavanger, the centre of the oil boom, to observe Norway's quiet new prosperity grafted on ancient Viking traditions. The city claims to be the heart of original Norway. Near Stavanger in 872 King Harald Fair-Hair won a battle which united the kingdom at a time when his countrymen were ruling much of the north, from Shetland to Dublin and from York to Iceland.

The cathedral with two towers capped by green copper roofs would not be out of place in any British city. It dates back to the 12th century and overlooks a small lake, the Breivatt, which gives the centre a sense of tranquillity and lends the city the air of being a Scandinavian Wells or Ripon across the North Sea.

A hundred yards away the market on the quay provides fresh fish and crab. For years Stavanger made a living from fishing, its fleets supporting 70 canneries where most adults worked. The factories - and the smell - have gone but the link to the sea is still there. In Gamle Stavanger, the old residential quarter, cobbled streets of handsome, carefully preserved wooden houses survive to show how merchants and sea captains lived a century or more ago. It is supposed to have more wooden buildings in one area than anywhere else in Europe. "People actually live there and they enjoy the feeling of history," says Ellen, a local resident.

The town once had a reputation of being tight-fisted, religious in a



Stavanger is supposed to have more wooden buildings than anywhere else in Europe

very conservative manner and an opponent of alcohol (in 1882 the Norwegian Total Abstinence Society was founded in the city). That reputation has abated a little. Yet overlooking the Breivatt is the local branch of Vinmonopolet, the state-wide alcohol monopoly which is a reminder that the subject of prohibition is still a live one in Norway, particularly in the countryside. In an elegant, modern and rather sparse shop a bottle of Tanqueray's gin will

cost you almost £30 while a bottle of Teacher's Scotch can be yours for £27. A Norwegian explanation for their partiality for alcohol and for the reaction against it comes from the fact that Norwegians lived alone in caves for 8,000 years, never inventing glasses or bottles and so always had to drink up the booze they manufactured at one go.

Stavanger has a number of attractive and cheery boozers, filled with happy drinkers sited around the

Vagen, the inner harbour. The Victoria Hotel where I stayed for about £50 a night (including one of those enormous Norwegian breakfasts) even has a pavement cafe.

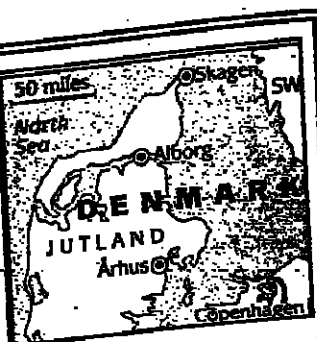
With or without alcohol, Stavanger is in the big time, headquarters of multi-million pound companies. In its harbour complicated floating factories which go out into the North Sea to service the oil and gas fields are tied up, while across the water shipyards hum and

bang. In waters near here they have built oil rigs 10 times as big as the Eiffel Tower.

But human endeavour in Stavanger is dwarfed by nature. This is Rogaland, the southern end of the fjord country where the combination of mountains and water make even the oilmen's mightiest efforts look puny. The best way to arrive in the city is not by plane or boat from England or Scotland but by taking the train from Oslo which takes you

through spectacular scenery of high fells and lakes and isolated farms.

On the Lysefjord is a flat-topped peak, the Prekestolen or Pulpit where those who don't suffer from fear of heights can - at the risk of falling to their death down a sheer 2,000 feet drop - get a 180 degree view of miles around. Though this writer would be taken up to such a height only under general anaesthetic, going there is a favourite outing for the locals.



GETTING THERE

YOU CAN reach Stavanger from a variety of British cities. Color Line (0191-296 1313) sails twice weekly from Newcastle, with a variety of special deals for short breaks. It is possible to fly to Stavanger from Aberdeen on KLM UK (0990 074074) and SAS (0845 607 2772); Glasgow on Wideroe (which operates a flight on behalf of SAS); London Gatwick on British Airways (0345 222111); London Heathrow on BA and SAS; and Newcastle on Braathens (0800 526938).

For longer stays, there is a variety of rail passes for Scandinavia, which allow unlimited travel all over Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark.

You can no longer buy these from Scandinavian Travel Services; try German Rail (0181-390 8833) or Rail Europe (0990 848848) instead.

The Norwegian Tourist Board, Charles House, 5-11 Lower Regent Street, London SW1Y 4LR (0171-839 6255) can provide information and free maps.

"The Norwegian's ideal is to be a son/daughter of the Sea, the Mountain, the Rustling Forest - in short a son/daughter of the Wilderness, independent of the nearby-parmy, European lowlands civilisation, with all its unnecessary luxury and comfort. A silent, pensive and unfettered bird who flies his own way," says Borretzen.

You can do and be all of that in Stavanger. And do it in considerable but understated oil-financed comfort.

A romantic tryst in Legoland

An inspired quest of artistic excellence to find a legendary musical duo during a hopelessly dewy-eyed weekend in Denmark's Land's End? Well, nearly. By Leonida Krushelnycky

IT WAS a disc jockey in the city of Aalborg who tipped us off about Sussi and Leo. An hour north of Aalborg, and you hit the end of Denmark at Skagen, a town so picturesque, Lego could have built it. Small ochre-coloured houses with chunky red roof-tiles straggled around a harbour bustling with trawlers even in the depths of winter. And a short walk out of town will bring you to natural phenomena that make you laugh and clap like a small child.

The North Sea and the Baltic meet at Skagen in a whirlpool of waves. Even in winter you'll see intrepid visitors trying to take pictures of their loved ones with one foot in the west and one in the east. Definitely more exciting than straddling the Greenwich meridian.

If you're not game enough for that, you can always retreat to the jewel of a museum dedicated to the works of Victorian artists who came to paint the light that bounces off the sea.

We had no time for frivolities. Opposite the museum, we found the Brøndums Hotel, an architectural gem. The warmth of a roaring fire beckoned us in. Instead of offering us a room within the hotel, the owner took us outside and showed us a small house nestled in its own tiny garden. We looked dubious until he showed us the bedroom complete with a working stove. Maybe I would get my romantic weekend after all.

Had we come from England to see the museum, or the famous Greenen beach where the Baltic and North Sea meet in glorious pitched battle? "No," we replied. "We've come to see Sussi and Leo." He was too professional to let his look of horror last more than a second. He left with the words, "You either love them or hate them," chilling in the cold air.

We nearly abandoned our quest then. But curiosity got the better of us. What could be so bad or so good that it divided a



Skagen, where the North Sea and Baltic meet

nation? We set off to find the Skansen pub.

It was ominously silent as we pushed open the door. Three locals sat hunched over the bar. But above them in glorious Technicolor hung T-shirts, posters and even life-belts all adorned with the smiling faces of Sussi and Leo. We had come to the Mecca of kitsch. And in the short time it took to order and down a Tuborg, Jonnie, the most ardent of their fans, told us the duo's life history as well as his own.

Sussi and Leo are paid the phenomenal amount of one million kroner to play five nights a week in the pub. This is not funny money - this is £100,000. They've been together for 25 years since they met at school. Sussi still makes their own costumes. Oh, and

Jonnie is Denmark's only Stoke City supporter; his disappointment that we'd never met Gordon Banks was heart-rending.

An hour later, the whole of Skagen was packed into the bar. Teenagers and old fishermen were dancing to the sounds of Sussi and Leo belting out the air-guitarists' favourite *Smoke on the Water*. After I had lifted my boyfriend off the floor, we stood giggling at the back watching them murder song after song after song. We had stumbled upon Denmark's best kept secret. A musical fusion of Abba and Des O'Connor, complete with accordion and spangly outfits.

During a short break in the proceedings, Sussi and Leo handed out pictures of themselves and signed autographs.

Instead of paper the fans began offering parts of their bodies. Foreheads and arms were held up. And Sussi didn't bat an eyelid when the man in front dropped his trousers - she bent down and signed his backside with a flourish. I approached Leo as he lit a pipe, and timidly asked for the secret of their success. He paused, took a puff, looked me deep in the eyes, and said sagely: "I don't know."

As the songs resumed we found ourselves dragged on to the dance floor. Where else but in Skagen could you be twirled around by a drunken Dane to the strains of *Loch Lomond*? But we knew it was time to leave when *Proud Mary* came around the fourth time, and a fisherman in waterproofs and galoshes staggered my way for

yet another frenzied dance. We did see the rest of Skagen the next day - the museum and the beach and the church partially buried by shifting sands. But the most famous landmark has to be Sussi and Leo. We love them; our growing CD collection proves it.

● Sussi and Leo play at the Skansen pub every night except Sunday and Monday.
● Skagen Museum opens daily from June to August from 10am to 6pm; shorter hours in winter. Brøndums Hotel, Anchervej 3 (00 45 98 441555), has rooms from £20 (£84 double).
● The Skagen tourist office is on St. Laurents Vej; open 9am-5.30pm Monday to Saturday, 10am-2pm on Sunday (00 45 98 441377).

Travelling the world can be child's play

The ups and downs of children flying alone. By Margaret St John



I CAN still remember the excitement. Almost 30 years ago, my sister and I flew, without our parents, from London to Dublin. My mother checked us in at Heathrow, where we received our enormous name badges, and a very nice air hostess took us down to the plane.

As many Coca-Colas as we could manage later, we were as nine and seven year old UMs (Unaccompanied Minors) able to find our baggage, go through the Green Channel and locate our perfectly relaxed father in the Arrivals Hall.

How things have changed! I tried to book a ticket for my 12-year-old goddaughter on Eurostar and was told that no one under the age of 14 could travel without an adult - "company policy," she said. They did finally let her travel as a UM when her parents wrote a letter which my goddaughter had to present to staff as she boarded the train.

Things are different with the airlines. The smaller, cheaper ones don't operate UM schemes. The larger, former national carriers have continued, but the format is much more structured. Moving children is a risky business. British Airways even offers a flying escort service for those unwilling to let their child fly alone.

British Airways started an unaccompanied minors programme in Heathrow back in 1962. Gatwick started in 1974, and in 1996/97, 1.3 million unaccompanied minors were passengers on what is now known (since 1988) as the Skyfliers programme. There is rarely an extra charge on any airline for being an unaccompanied

minor, which must come as a great relief to the parents of children at boarding school and those who need their offspring to travel separately.

On average, children (or their parents) pay two-thirds of the normal adult flight price. Most airlines offer the service from the age of six, although some airlines take passengers as young as four. More travel, overseas postings and mixed country marriages (and divorces) mean that this market can only grow.

The rules of each airline vary slightly and it is worthwhile checking the exact procedure as you book the ticket. Procedures are followed rigidly at check-in time so allow a bit of extra time. Parents and guardians need to sign the appropriate paperwork and inform the airline who will be collecting the child at the destination.

It is crucial that the person collecting the child has an accepted form of identity such as a passport. The person leaving the child is then asked to wait at the departure terminal for at least ten minutes after take-off. Caroline Ricketts, who is now ten, enjoyed travelling as a UM when her parents were based at the British embassy in Paris. She liked the cartoons and the computer games and the free crisps in the lounge.

She also liked her free travel bag with the colouring pencils and puzzles. Her brother Edward did tire of all the "nanny-ing" when he got to be about ten or 11 and it is probably for this reason that most of the airlines do not offer the service after the age of 12.

However, on one occasion, nobody called Edward and he almost missed his flight. His mother, Suzanne, was not impressed. She wrote a letter to British Airways complaining about the incident and Edward was sent a "horrible plastic Concorde" as compensation.

Melanie de Renzy Martin's son, Henry, was younger and not so lucky. He was not collected for his flight when it was leaving Amsterdam and his parents were left stranded at Heathrow for about 90 minutes, not knowing what was going on.

The key seems to be to prepare your child well in advance for their trip travelling alone, presenting it as an exciting and grown-up thing to do. According to a friend of mine, who is a flight-attendant with Air France, children are well prepared, easy going and "generally" well behaved. "They just love those enormous pouches that carry their passports and we rarely have any NUMs," (Naughty Unaccompanied Minors).

هكذا من الأصل



Baywatch on the hoof

No matter what the weather, the going at one Irish racing festival is always good. By Eddie Wiley. Photographs by Caroline Norris

SUN, SEA, sand and a six-race card make for a great day at the annual beach race at Laytown, Co Meath, on the east coast of Ireland. Even being compelled to substitute stormy skies, intermittent rain and a breeze that the locals described as "fresh", but had everyone else swaying at 45 degree angles, didn't dampen the enthusiasm. Eccentricity is a hallmark of many Irish festivals - this week sees the start of the International Bachelor Festival in Ballybunion, Co Kerry, and in September the hugely popular Match-making Festival takes place in Lisdoonvarna, Co Clare - but the Laytown Race Festival is unique.

The annual race meeting was started by the local parish priest in 1868. Being frowned upon by his bishop, the priest conveniently assuaged his conscience by running the festival every second

year. Since 1901, the races have been held annually with the support of the Delaney family who donate the use of the land and have continued to play a part in the festivities.

Beach racing also has its place in literary history. In the otherwise risible stage-Irish production, *Old Malone* recognises his eponymous son, *The Playboy of the Western World*, as the winning jockey. In fairness to the author, J M Synge, even his demi-heroine widow Quinn would have found the going heavy to get a bet on around the packed betting ring. The real-life punters had to wait until the fourth race for a winning favourite to gallop down the ocean course. Theatrical certainly but definitely not a *Baywatch* production. Laytown's equivalent of David Hasselhoff and his lithe Californians were the tweed-

wrapped stewards clinging ruddy-faced to a life guard podium that could well have been deployed at the first meeting 130 years ago.

With an eye to increase safety following the death of a number of horses in 1996, the course has been changed from an oval to a straight 10 furlongs, with well-established running rails, head-on cameras and all the accoutrements of a very professionally-run race meeting. Set against the backdrop of billowing marquees, street entertainers and traditional musicians, it's as if Newmarket's Rowley Mile meets JP Barrow. And with races like the Guinness Perfect Pint Handicap, it's little wonder that the hospitality tents resembled a sack full of rabbits as they bulged with the throng of obviously parched race goers.

This year a line in the sand

had to be drawn with the contribution of the Beaufort Dyke. The Sapphically-named deep sea trench, running between Northern Ireland and Scotland, was the dumping ground for millions of tonnes of Second World War ordnance. A recent cable-laying operation has resulted in the some of the nasty items, mostly incendiary bombs, washing ashore on the east coast. But with the beach closed to the public on race day, and a full-scale safety operation involving the army and civil defence forces, the area was declared safe for racing.

Even the appearance of the "This one's for you Adolf" surprises didn't perturb Brendan Sheridan, the retired National Hunt jockey and now clerk of the course: "No matter what the weather or the sea turn up, the going at Laytown is always good." And who would doubt it?



48 hours in the life of Cologne

Coffee and cream cakes in a Gothic city, anyone? Join a 750th birthday party and enjoy the music and beer, with plenty of culture thrown in. By Cathy Packe

Why go now?

This year has been designated "Gothic Year" in Cologne with a series of events celebrating the 750th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone of the city's magnificent cathedral, known generally as the Dom. Throughout the summer there will be exhibitions, music and a medieval market in and around the cathedral.

Beam down

Cologne airport isn't particularly close to the city, and competition from Heathrow between British Airways and British Midland (also masquerading as Lufthansa) isn't exactly intense. The option of a Debonair flight (0500 146 200) from Luton to Mönchengladbach (also known as "Düsseldorf Express"), followed by an hour's bus ride from the airport into the centre of Cologne, may be worth considering. Fares start at £116 including tax.

A cheaper alternative is to take Eurostar (0345 303030) to Brussels and then the connecting train to Cologne, making a total journey time of just under six hours. The lowest fare is £89, for a stay of three nights during the week, or over a Saturday night. Even better, the railway station is right in the centre of the city, next to the Dom.

Get your bearings

Cologne is the largest city on the Rhine. In the Middle Ages it was part of the Hanseatic League, the prosperous trading alliance of northern and Baltic towns. There has been a community here since Roman times, although like many German cities, it was largely rebuilt after heavy Allied bombing during the Second World War. Although the city now extends across both sides of the river, most tourists will stay on the left bank, in an area that fans out from the river in a semicircle, marked by the first of a series of ring roads, following the line of the old city walls.

Check in

If you like a bit of uncertainty, you can get excellent bargains through the Cologne Tourist Office (00 49 221 2213345): turn up at this office, opposite the cathedral, any time during the week (9am-10.30pm Mon-Sat, 9am-10.30pm Sun) and see what is available. The office deals with accommodation in all price ranges and will often be able to get you a reduction of up to 50 per cent on the normal "rack rate".

If you prefer to book in advance, the Drei Kronen (Auf dem Brand 6, tel 00 49 221 258 0692) is a pleasant new hotel in the old part of the city with lovely views of the river; a single room will cost around DM139 (£49) and a dou-

ble is DM159 (£56), including breakfast. If you are prepared to forgo an on-suite shower at the Hotel Berg (Grundenburgerstrasse 6, tel 00 49 221 132 691) you will pay DM75 (£27) for a single or DM95 (£34) for a double, again including breakfast. You can also visit the tourist office website (www.koeln.org/koeln-tourismus): this gives a selection of places to stay, categorised according to price, location and facilities. It is worth bearing in mind that Cologne is often host to large international conferences and trade fairs, and hotels are often booked well in advance, so plan accordingly.

Take a hike

The long riverfront is used for cycling, in-line skating, or just walking about seeing who is around, almost in the manner of the Italian passeggiata. When you need something more architectural to look at, turn inland to the narrow streets filling a square created by the river, Hohestrasse, and the roads coming off the Deutzer Brücke and the Hohenzollernbrücke.

Lunch on the run

The old town is full of cafés serving various kinds of sausage with potato salad, as well as pizzas, pasta and other international food. You can also settle for a light snack: there are plenty of cafés, bistros, and bakeries (for takeaway sandwiches and pastries) near the Dom which fit the bill.

Cultural afternoon

The choice of museums in Cologne extends to beer, chocolate and the Beatles, although there are plenty that are more traditional. A modern complex next to the Dom houses the Wallraf Richartz Museum and the Museum Ludwig, two collections of, respectively, ancient and modern paintings that complement each other and the stunning building in which they are displayed. The Romisch-Germanisches museum is a collection covering the history of the city from its Roman roots, including the beautiful Dionysos Mosaic which was found by archaeologists in 1941, as well as a superb collection of Roman glass.

Window shopping

The 24-hour society is slow to reach Germany, at least as far as shopping is concerned. On Saturdays the shops shut at 4pm - and this is an improvement on recent habits - although closing time is later during the week. Several of the department stores, and many other interesting smaller shops, are on or around Hohestrasse. Cologne's most famous export is 4711, the world-



The spires of the medieval cathedral are a symbol of Cologne, visible from virtually everywhere in the city. Bildagentur Schuster/Robert Harding Picture Library

famous eau de Cologne (or Kölnwasser), on sale in its original home in Glockengasse. The house number is 4711 - not because the street is unusually long, but because in the days when the French occupied the city at the end of the 18th century, the soldiers needed a way of remembering where they were billeted, so all the houses in the city were numbered individually. The building is now an elegant, old-fashioned shop selling every possible variation on the theme, including soap, perfumed sachets and tea towels commemorating the story of the perfume.

An aperitif

The local speciality is Kölsch, a light, rather bitter beer brewed in various breweries in and around the city, which is served in small, elegant glasses. Enjoy some in one of the open-air cafés of the old town, or go to one of the brewpubs that specialise in beer drinking. Braubaus Sion, near the Dom at Unter Taschenmacher 9, is an unusual combination of a place in the tourist heartland.

Deutsche dinner

Having tried the home brew, you may wish to turn your attention to some

of the local wines. One of the most famous winehouses, and among Cologne's finest restaurants, is the Weinhaus im Walfisch, at Salzgasse 13 (00 49 221 219 575). Housed in a beautiful, gabled 17th-century building, it has a pleasant atmosphere and serves most of Germany's most traditional dishes.

Sunday morning - go to church Churches are hard to avoid here: in the old town alone there is a choice of 12 which survive from the Romanesque period. The foundation stone for the Gothic Dom, meanwhile, was laid in 1248 and it was built

over the following 500 years. It was important during the days of the Holy Roman Empire, and is now the seat of the primate of Germany.

The icing on the cake

The opportunity for kaffee und kuchen should never be passed up, and Sunday morning is an ideal time for a bit of self-indulgence. Café Reichard, near the Dom at Unter Fettenhennen 11, is a good choice.

A walk in the park

The Rheinpark is on the right bank of the river, in the suburb known as Deutz, and is easy to get to on the

tram. As well as being a pleasant place to walk off the effects of some of those cakes, there are excellent views of the city and the twin towers of the Dom.

Way upstream

Not exactly vigorous exercise, but a trip down the Rhine is an enjoyable way of getting a new perspective on Cologne and its surroundings. There is a wide variety of different trips, from an hour-long city sightseeing tour to a cruise of up to a week. If you want something in-between, KD (which stands for Köln-Düsseldorf) tel 00 49 221 208 8318 runs daily tours upstream to Bonn and beyond.

CAN YOU Rearrange

the following words into a well known phrase:

Dull, is, city, Brussels, a?

Same sea. Different bottle of fish.

Ever wondered why the fish you get in Brussels is so much better than other fish even though they all come from the same sea? The plain fact is, Brussels has so many good restaurants, you'll be hard pressed to find a bad one, although in truth, there are a few mediocre eateries where you can spot many a home-sick English diner. So if you do, remember to keep well clear.

Brussels has more beers than you can shake a... arm stick at. There are light beers, dark beers, raspberry flavoured beers, FLAT beers, FIZZY beers, EVEN beer flavoured beers. On a slightly more elevated note, there are many monasteries in Belgium that moonlight as breweries. (Truly heaven on earth). All this goes some way to explaining why beer is something of a religion over here and why it has become a glorification to connoisseurs of the frothy stuff.

The heart of Europe, but you have to find the pulse.

To the inexperienced eye, there's no duller place on earth. But in reality, there are so many things to do in Brussels. You can eat (very well), you can drink (very much) and you can live life (to the full). So take a deep breath and book a weekend in Brussels at bargain prices. Then you can see what you've been missing.

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RED CHANNEL

What your E111 will do for you in the European Economic Area

The Department of Health publishes a booklet called *Health Advice for Travellers* (free by calling 0800 555 777), which includes an application form for E111.

Get the completed form stamped at a post office and you'll be entitled to a range of medical benefits when on holiday abroad. But, as this survey of countries in northern Europe shows, the benefits are often hard to get and none of them covers everything.

Austria: E111 not required. British citizens get their full entitlement just by showing their passports. But "a small daily charge will be made for each of the first 28 days in hospital".

If you decide (or are obliged by circumstances) to go private, you may be entitled to a refund up to the amount that would have been payable to you in a public hospital.

Belgium: 75 per cent of the cost of treatment and prescribed medicines - but you have to pay for it first. Ambulance charges are not refundable.

Denmark: E111 not required. You should get free treatment and reduced-rate prescribed medicines at pharmacies, just by showing a British passport. If you have to pay, then the local council should give you a receipt.

Finland: E111 not required. In hospitals, you pay 125 FIM (about £12) a day for in-patient treatment. 100 FIM for out-

patients. You'll be entitled to treatment either free or at a nominal rate, and for half the cost of prescribed medicines exceeding about £5.

France: Life for the E111-holder is complicated. As an in-patient, you will be issued with the hospital with a certificate, an attestation. Then the hospital sends a notice of admission (avis d'admission) to the local sickness insurance office, which should pay 75 per cent of the charges direct to the hospital. You have to pay the remaining quarter, together with a daily hospital charge (forfait journalier) of FF70 (about £7).

For doctors and dentists, first make sure that your chosen practitioner works within the French health system - the term is *conventionné*. You have to pay in full for everything first, but after treatment, ask for a statement of the treatment given, called a *feuille de soins*.

Prescribed medicines have a detachable label called a *vignette* which you tear off and stick on the *feuille*. You sign and date the form, send it to the nearest sickness insurance office, and around two months later you should get a refund, for 70 per cent of doctors' or dentists' fees and between one-third and two-thirds of the cost of prescribed medicines.

Germany: several insurance companies administer the health service. Present your E111 to one of these, providing that you're physically able to do so, and the local office is open. To minimise bureaucracy, the best advice is to be too ill to contact one of them before you are admitted

to hospital. Give the E111 to the hospital, and they should deal with the bureaucracy for you. You'll have to pay DM17 (£6) a day in the former West Germany and DM14 (£5) in the old DDR for the first fortnight of your stay in hospital.

For less intensive treatment, the insurance company will give you an *Abrechnungsschein* for doctors (Erfassungsschein for dentists), plus a list of practitioners contracted to the insurance company. If you can't get the form in advance, go to a contracted-in doctor and present your E111. If the doctor doesn't get paid within 10 days, he or she can send you a bill.

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GREEN CHANNEL

HOW CAN you be sure an ecotour is ecologically and socially sensitive? The US-based Ecotourism Society has published "Questions to an ecotour operator" and suggests "ideal" answers.

Q. Does the ecotour operator show a commitment to local conservation?
A. Conservation can be actively encouraged by developing local conservation projects. Donations to local organisations concentrating on environmental concerns are also a good indicator of commitment.

Q. Does the ecotour directly benefit local inhabitants?
A. This should be a key component. An operator can aid the

community by using local workers, local produce and locally owned lodges.

Q. Does the operator have a waste-management policy?
A. This can include using recycled and biodegradable materials; advising visitors to minimise the disposable products carried on trips; and ensuring that all rubbish taken into fragile areas is removed after visits.

Q. How else is the impact of ecotours minimised?
A. By educating travellers about the best way to minimise their impact; protecting fresh water and other limited natural resources; by choosing locally owned and/or sustain-

ably managed lodges; respecting a community's privacy; care when viewing wildlife.

Q. Does the operator limit visitor numbers to fragile environments?
A. Natural ecosystems may be degraded due to sheer visitor numbers. Ecotour operators should liaise with local authorities and competitors to coordinate visits. Fragile environments should be monitored and examples of environmental destruction reported.

The Ecotourism Society, PO Box 755, North Bennington, VT 05257, US (802-447-2121; fax: 802-447-2122; e-mail: ecotourism.org; web site: www.ecotourism.org)

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Somme fine day ...

Take advantage of northern France's new motorways to explore the quiet coast of Picardy. By Gerard Gilbert

THERE WAS a time when a day trip across the Channel to Calais or Boulogne meant sticking to your Channel port of destination - or a timid excursion as far as one of the prettier villages in the Pas de Calais (and there are some). A rich stuffing of a restaurant later, and the duty free beckoned before the journey home. The motorways have changed all that. The final piece in the jigsaw of new autoroutes that have been slicing through the vast, flat plains of northern France over the past 10 years fell into place last month with the opening of the A16 between Boulogne and Abbeville. For a toll of 40 francs, it is now possible to reach the fringes of Normandy well within an hour of leaving your Shuttle or ferry at Calais, and some interesting destinations have been opened up to the quickie traveller.

Foremost amongst these must be the Bay of the Somme, where the Somme canal, built by Napoleon to connect the river Somme with the English Channel, filters into the sea. It's one of the quietest, oddest and least explored corners of France, and now it's within an easy burn of the Channel ports.

Perhaps it's the Somme's associations with the slaughter of the First World War that puts people off - but the river's wide estuary saw none of that, although St Valéry, at the western side of the bay, was a British freight port in those dreadful years. The town saw action again briefly in May 1940, before reverting to its accustomed state of dreamy slumber - of big skies, opaque light, birdsong and colourful shrimping boats stranded by the low tide.

When driving down the A16 from Calais and Boulogne, come off at Exit 24 and head for St Valéry-sur-Somme or Le Crotoy, which bookend the Bay of Somme. Both have their charms, although I prefer St Valéry, home of Colette and weekend retreat of Jules Verne. Le Crotoy, not to be outdone, is where Joan of Arc was imprisoned in 1430 before being taken to her date with destiny in Rouen. Legend has it that Harold of Wessex was another illustrious prisoner of the region. One of history's greatest misadventures, it seems. As it happened, I approached the Somme from the other direction, along the coast road west from



Le Crotoy on the Bay de Somme, where Joan of Arc was imprisoned in 1430

Frank Spooner Pictures

Dieppe. This gives you the chance first to take in the faded seaside resort to beat all faded seaside resorts - lovely pebble-beached Cayeux-sur-Mer with its white beach huts, the largest number in one resort in Europe. The landscape around here is reminiscent of the Suffolk coast. The ambitiously named Brighton-Pins, however, reminded me of nothing on Earth. Apparently built to attract visitors from England, this now sand-swept huddle of shuttered holiday homes would make a superb movie backdrop. Early Roman Polanski, perhaps, or a

French version of *The Avengers*. The coast road, which is shadowed by an impressive cycle path, takes you into St Valéry, and lunch at Le Relais Guillaume de Normandie (that's William the Conqueror to you and me). It's not obligatory, but the views of the bay from the turn-of-the-century dining-room make it very worthwhile.

As does the use of *pré-salé* lamb in the menu. This is lighter and saltier than the norm; the lambs have been grazed for a minimum of 120 days on the bay's salt marshes. On the 677 menu at the Relais I took it

in the form of a delicious warming stew - a bit too warming, in fact, on such a humid June day. And, in honour of the fact that I was in the province of Picardy, I started with a *ficelle picarde*, a savoury crepe filled with ham, mushrooms and onions. After lunch a walk was obviously in order - and there are some adventurous and highly unusual walks to be had in and around the bay. Potentially dangerous, too. If you want to go hiking on the bay itself, then you must make sure - as signs everywhere make clear - that the tide is at least three-and-a-half

hours off being at its height. It can come crashing back in more quickly than you can walk in the boggy mud. Tide timetables can be bought for 5F at the Tourist office in Place Guillaume le Conquerant. That William the Conqueror again.

It is also heavily advised that you hire a guide, although there were none available until the high season, according to the tourist office. So, with slight relief, I must admit, I headed off to Le Marqueterie Bird Park, a supremely well organised preservation area set amidst 2,300 hectares of marsh and sand dunes

to the north west of Le Crotoy. It is a temporary home to more than 300 species of migratory bird, stopping off between Russia, Africa and the Arctic; only the Camargue region plays host to more avian passengers than the Bay of the Somme.

Having never lifted a pair of binoculars in anger before, I was seduced by the park. Two itineraries are on offer: a 2-kilometre-round ramble, which takes about an hour; and a more ambitious 6-km hike, for which "binoculars are strongly recommended". I was there last week, and ducklings learning to swim were

stealing the show. It's exhilarating just to be ambling along and have a heron or a stork swoop by at head height - although the party of noisy French schoolchildren ahead made me wish for something more predatory.

Motorists can sail to Calais from Dover on Hoverspeed (01304 240241), P&O Stena Line (0990 980980) or SeaFrance (0990 711711), or travel through the Channel Tunnel on Le Shuttle (0990 353535). Fares for short breaks are good value, and a return journey for a car and two people could cost as little as £50.

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TRAVEL

48 HOURS IN COLOGNE 18 • HENRY MOORE ON THE ROAD 22

When Pele pits her wits against Na Maka o Kaha'i, the result can be cataclysmic. Paris Franz follows the Destruction Trail to the red-hot core of Hawaii's Mount Kilauea

A flow of spirits

THE SMELL of sulphur is not unpleasant to a sinner, at least according to Mark Twain, and he may well be right. It is best sampled on a full stomach, however, which could explain why there is a cafeteria at the top of Mount Kilauea. The visitor's centre at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park is perched on the lip of the caldera of the world's most active volcano, complete with rocks, vents and sulphur clouds, and the sight does wonders for the appetite.

The cafeteria was crowded but the three of us managed to get a table by the window with its panoramic view of the caldera, 10 miles in circumference. Against a background of lively chatter and the dramatic music accompanying a video showing a stately flow of lava, we ordered coffee and began our research.

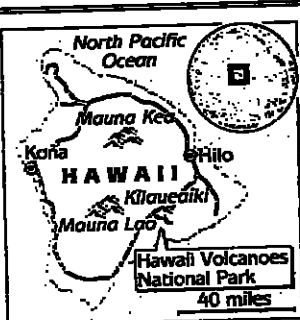
You don't have to be in the islands long to know that Hawaii is volcanoes. Situated above a hot spot in the earth's crust, the Aloha State owes its existence to the tumultuous forces of nature deep down in the Earth, each island being the product of fiery eruptions over the millennia. As the Pacific Plate moves ever so slowly north-westwards, new islands are formed. The Big Island, geology in action, is over the hot spot now, and it's getting bigger all the time, with the flows of lava adding acres of land to the coast each year. The leaflets picked up in the lobby were full of such information. One advised us that eruptions occur every 11 months, on average: that one flow destroyed houses but changed direction to avoid an ancient temple, or *heiau*; that violent explosions are rare. That last one was nice to know.

It seems that scientists have combed every square inch of Kilauea. But science isn't all, it turns out, because another leaflet revealed that Mount Kilauea is also the home of Madame Pele. The melter of rocks, the burner of lands and maker of mountains, Pele is to be respected. She lives in Hateramaunui Crater, within the caldera, and she can apparently be a most capricious host. It is said that should you meet her, in whatever form she takes - beautiful young woman, ugly old hag - it's wise to be kind.

This reminded me of a man I had met in Honolulu. He'd told me that a volcanologist friend of his had a picture of a flaming crater, and there in the middle was a young woman with streaming black hair and an imperious chin. You had to see it in the right light, he said.

Whatever the merits of the volcanologist's photograph, it's a fact that the local post office regularly receives chunks of rock from previous visitors who are convinced that such souvenirs have brought them bad luck. And offerings are still left on the mountainside. Gin, usually. Well, it can't hurt.

Pele's certainly been busy lately. The current flow was a big one, by all accounts, and worth a look, so we headed back to the car for a drive down the Chain of Craters Road. Passing the Thurston Lava Tube and Devastation Trail, we followed the road to the end, which came suddenly, 25 miles later. A lava flow had cut the road and it was clear we would have to walk from here.



HAWAII FACTS

Getting there: There are no direct flights from the UK to anywhere in the state of Hawaii. It is difficult to reach Hilo on the island of Hawaii with a single change of plane; you will normally have to travel via Los Angeles or San Francisco, and Honolulu. Discount agents such as Quest Worldwide (0181-546 6000) sell tickets for travel on United in June for £671 including tax.

More information: Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau, 2270 Kalaniana'one Avenue, Suite 801, Honolulu, Hawaii US 96815 (001 808 923 1811)

It was a two-mile hike to where the lava entered the sea, but there was no chance of getting lost. A massive plume of steam rose into the air ahead of us, and that was where everyone was headed. We followed carefully. The lava underfoot hardened into whorls and spirals as it cooled, sparkling silver and gold in the afternoon sun. Here and there tufts of stubborn green pushed their way through the cracks, while a withered guard of tree trunks stood entombed in black rock.

There, amid such stark and dramatic scenery, it was easy to imagine the battle that took place between Kamehameha the Great, the first man to unite the islands, and Keoua, a rival chieftain. The bulk of Keoua's forces were overwhelmed by a volcanic eruption, or so the story goes. It was clear whose side Pele was on.

The closer we got to the ocean, the more the wind picked up, the spray falling like rain, the surf pounding hard against the wall of lava below us. This is the eternal battle between Pele and Na Maka o Kaha'i, goddess of the sea. The legend says that Na Maka o Kaha'i has pursued Pele from island to island, and it doesn't look as if she's satisfied yet.

Recklessly, I clambered down on to a ledge. A black cliff rose up behind me, the billowing steam blotting out the sky. Then the wind changed and the steam parted to reveal a river of molten lava, all orange and red, pouring into the sea. A wrenching, cracking sound came from close by, as a big chunk of lava cracked under the strain, falling into the Pacific with a mighty splash.

Score one for Na Maka o Kaha'i. Don't discount Pele, though. She has dug deep and built high on the Big Island, and she's also looking to the future. While the Big Island is still getting bigger, some 20 miles to the south-east the Loihi Seamount gets closer to the surface with each eruption. Pele will always have somewhere to go.

Windswept and damp, we headed back to the car and the bright lights of Kilauea, with traffic building up as we went. There was some anxiety about driving on the other side of the road, but we got back safe and sound. Who knows, maybe Madame Pele was looking after us.



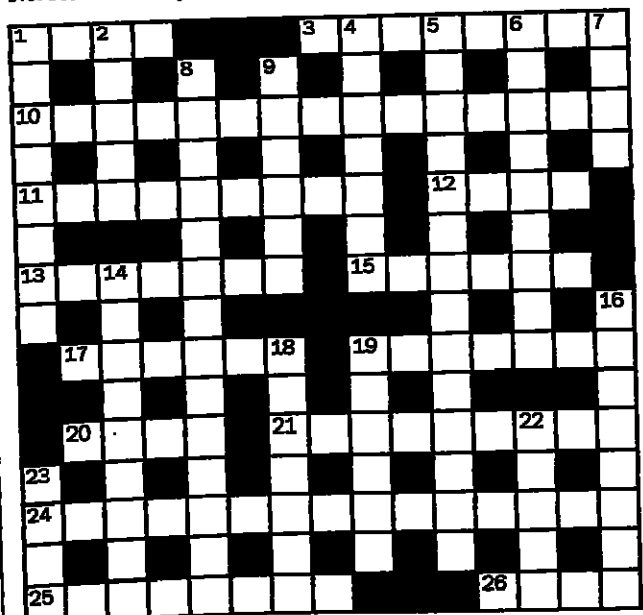
Kilauea is the result of warring spirits, so Hawaiian lore has it

Douglas Peebles/Robert Harding Picture Library

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3636. Saturday 13 June

By Phil



Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution

RESUME TRIPUP
IMMEDIATE BOUNCE
NIMBLE COMBUSTION
DIAMOND MERCHANT
BIRDIE RATION
PINED AUDIENCE
COCKTAIL CABINET
FINISH FILAMENT
CHOOSE AGREES

ACROSS

- 1 Disgusting mass of oil obscuring Lake (4)
- 3 A great many backed new cattle-worker (8)
- 10 Resigning oneself to a problem with eating gamebirds? (6,3,6)
- 11 Greet pain with resolution - it's recurrent (9)
- 12 Tragic heroine acted with love (4)
- 13 Conservative needs help holding in group of ministers (7)
- 15 Warm up gets theatre excited, taking no time (6)
- 17 Take off and put into orbit (4,2)
- 19 They bar changes in the memory (2,5)
- 20 Is family something very close? (4)
- 21 It's unlikely to be able to help ease a Tequila hangover! (9)
- 24 Are our foes retreating? It's only a question of time (3,4,3,5)
- 25 Gory cell cleaned up with sweet stuff (8)
- 26 Runs away from tense woman (4)

DOWN

- 1 Take away leaflet about sea transport? (8)
- 2 TUC upset? (3,2)
- 4 State imprisoning English as a source of retaliation (7)
- 5 Moving due North, keeps on a circuitous course (5,3,6)
- 6 Sensational play shocked moral dame (9)
- 7 A, B, C, D, F or G? (4)
- 8 One could retire on this (i.e. man renowned working (8,6)
- 9 Meticulous curtailment of diversion in street (8)
- 14 Magistrate imprisoning leader of robbers - one means to escape (5,4)
- 16 Girlfriend's willing? Hold back! (6,2)
- 18 Artist shows picture when exactly right (7)
- 19 B. (mild curse) (6)
- 22 Laughter maker longing to indulge in laugh (not half) (6)
- 23 Yank seizes head of hardened criminal (4)

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive hardbacked copies of *Answers and winners' names* will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, E.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5BL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: R. Barclay, Lee-on-Solent; M. Foss, Teddington; M. Zimmerman, St. Albans; J. Smith, St. Helier; T. Rayner-Smith, Newport.

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CHECK IN

A PLANE

Whatever happened to the Boeing 717? In the Sixties, the sequence of number from the Seattle-based aircraft manufacturer jumped from the 707 to the 727, and has since reached 777. So No 717 is being applied to a new, small jet that was being developed by McDonnell Douglas before Boeing took it over last year.

It is a twin-jet seating about 100, and the engines are made by BMW/Rolls-Royce in Germany. This week the 717 was rolled out in Long Beach, California; next year the first commercial flight will take place. The launch customer is AirTran - the low-cost airline formerly known as ValuJet.

A BOAT

If you were planning to sail to Belgium on the new ferry line Sally Direct (0845 600 2626), you won't have much luck. Passengers from Ramsgate to Ostend are not being allowed to disembark at the Belgian port. Once it has permission to land people there, the company will charge £25 for a 24-hour return for a car plus five people.

A ROOM

Hamburg's newest hotel, the ultra-swish Park Hyatt Hamburg, has a summer special of DM 245/285 single/double until September. A double room rate of under £100 is excellent value, and the Park

great café cities of Europe, in a znew Independent/Café Crème competition.

A MONTH FROM NOW

Hyatt has the added benefit of some character; it occupies the top five floors of the Levantehaus, a 1911 warehouse. To book, call the UK number 0345 581666 or dial direct on 00 49 40 33 32 12 34.

A DRINK

The traditional Eurostar picnic could be depleted or expensive this week. Until two days after the World Cup final (14 July), passengers are banned from bringing alcohol through the Channel. This applies to services to Brussels and Paris. The cheapest on-board beer is a 33cl can for £1.80, which works out at £3 per pint; champagne, free in first class, costs £19 a bottle.

... two new connections will be made from British airports. EasyJet (0990 392929) is launching flights from Luton to Athens, with fares from £69 one-way. EasyJet has plans for a separate airline, EasyJet Greece, aimed at the Greek domestic market.

In Scotland, Continental Airlines (0800 776464) has a new non-stop flight from Glasgow to Newark. Continental's East Coast hub has connections all over the US.

A YEAR FROM NOW

... you could attend the Roots Festival in The Gambia, a week-long celebration of Gambian culture that also commemorates the enslavement of millions of Africans. Gambia Experience (01703 790888) is offering a fortnight at the Badala Park hotel next June for £418, including flights.

A WEEK FROM NOW

... you will be able to compete for a weekend in one of the

TODAY'S TELEVISION APPEARS IN THE SEPARATE LISTINGS GUIDE

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PERSONAL FINANCE • MOTORING • PROPERTY

Motoring	9
Property: how to rent, buy or sell	10-12

NIC
CICUTTI

Building societies and the BSA aren't that cynical. Are they?

I HAVE always had a soft spot for the Building Societies Association (BSA), which represents mutually-owned lending institutions.

Building societies have in recent years stood up for the interests of ordinary people. They deliver lower-cost mortgages and higher rates on savings accounts than most banks, including those like the Halifax, Woolwich and Alliance & Leicester - which used to be societies themselves.

Which is why I find the latest proposal by the BSA's director general, Adrian Coles, so barmy.

Mr Coles and the BSA have issued a consultative paper which proposes scrapping redemption penalties, the nasty little stings in the tail affecting those who want to switch their mortgages at the end of fixed and discounted mortgage periods.

The BSA argues, among other things, that redemption penalties prevent people from avoiding "interest rate shock", when you move suddenly from a low fixed rate to a much higher variable one. The difference can mean hundreds of pounds a month in mortgage payments.

By cutting redemption penalties, you make cut-price deals much harder to offer, therefore people won't suffer this shock so badly, seems to be the line.

Forgive me, but I don't buy the argument. Sure, there will almost always be a minority of people who suffer when their mortgages rise at the end of a fixed or discounted period.

But for the most part, the reasons why people have been attracted by such deals are utilitarian: they offer a way of controlling home loan costs for a time, usually at a lower rate than is currently payable. Alternatively, with cashbacks, they give borrowers a lump sum to do up the properties they have just bought.

In other words, they suit

certain kinds of borrowers and perform a useful service for them. Sure, such deals are also open to abuse, usually when the penalties for switching loans midstream are hidden in the small print or are too onerous.

Then again, variable rate loans are not exactly wonderful either: those of us who had the misfortune of borrowing in the 80s will remember mortgage costs virtually doubling over a short period of time. Fixing would at least have prevented the despair many felt whenever the next building society letter announcing a rate rise dropped onto the mat.

What guarantee is there that if we all gave up fixed rates, discounts or cashbacks that lenders - building societies included - would treat us more fairly? Precious little, I suspect.

That is why I don't quite understand the reason for the BSA's move to reduce our choice in this way. Unless of course it owes more to the desire by building societies to win business from banks and retain it.

You see, the societies argue they are more competitive than banks and, for the most part, they are - at least when it comes to offering cheaper variable rate loans. Nationwide's is 0.6 per cent better than the Halifax.

Discounts and fixes have an unfortunate habit of obscuring this fact, particularly when lenders want to "buy business" by offering extra-soft deals. They then make the money back by locking us in for a few years. If I were a cynical building society chief, I might be tempted to argue in favour of scrapping redemption penalties just so that the competition is forced to compete on my own turf. And so what customers actually want.

Of course, I must be wrong about all of this. Building societies and the BSA aren't that cynical. Are they?

FINANCIAL MAKEOVER

Towards a French future

Names: David Marsh and Edward Moss.
Ages: 47 and 32.
Occupations: former head-teacher and teacher.

The problem: David has taken early retirement but Edward is still employed. They would like to spend more time in France, where they own a property. The ideal balance would be to spend six months in the UK and six months in France. The couple want to know how to maximise their earnings, including the possibility of buying another property, plus investing a large lump sum.

The solution: If spending more time in France is important, it may make sense to sell their home in the UK and buy a smaller one, particularly when David and Edward won't be using it that often. Buying another house in the UK for investment purposes does not make sense. The couple should invest their cash for retirement but also use some of the money to pay off their existing mortgage.

DAVID AND EDWARD have been together for about six years. Both have worked in the teaching profession, from which David recently retired on grounds of stress. His pension is £15,000 a year. Edward is still working and his present salary is about £25,000 a year.

The couple live in David's home in London, valued at £200,000. This costs about £1,100 a month in mortgage, insurance and other services. They also have a cottage in France, which is mostly paid for and which costs some £700 a year to run, although the couple say they spend a lot more than that on its garden.

David has some £32,000 on deposit, paid to him as severance when he retired. He has an endowment policy which matures in 2012, with a minimum value of £75,000. Other than that the couple's investments are minimal.

Edward is still a member of the teachers' superannuation scheme, into which he pays up to the legal maximum via a combination of top-up contributions with Prudential and Barclays schemes.



David Marsh and Edward Moss are looking for an easier and more satisfying life

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

variety of options. They are carrying a large mortgage at the moment, £110,000, with a policy to back it that does not mature for another 14 years.

As both Edward and David want to spend more time in France, it would make sense for them to move towards this eventual outcome. I therefore recommend that they should consider selling the property in England, albeit not necessarily immediately. They can then purchase a more modest property which will have the advantage of reducing their monthly outgoings.

Bearing in mind that they spend only nine months of the year in the UK, they are not getting full value for their mortgage commitment. Of course David should retain the endowment to set against a future property and in any event even if the mortgage is entirely discharged, then he should maintain this as a savings plan to

give a lump sum at some stage in the future. If they wanted to realise the money earlier it may be possible to reduce the term of the policy so long as there is 10 years to maturity.

The ideal amount of mortgage would be £30,000-£40,000 as this will reduce commitments dramatically and enable David and Edward to increase their savings towards the goal of early retirement for Edward and more time spent in France.

Edward is up to his limit in terms of pension contributions. He should obviously maintain things at this level as his income increases. If he wants to retire at age 50, he will have had 22 years' service by then. However, these days it is much harder for teachers to retire earlier and there are likely to be early-retirement penalties which Edward should investigate by asking his pensions department.

I anticipate that by main-

taining the additional voluntary contributions (AVCs) he is already making, Edward is heading for 11 per cent of his income or some £2,750 per annum in real terms at age 50. It would be ideal if we could make this up to two-thirds, which would involve another increased commitment from Edward of about £300 per month. He is paying £150 per month into a PEP which goes some way towards this. However, he should look as soon as he can to increase this and preferably double it.

It would not be sensible for Edward to purchase another property. It would make David and Edward's financial circumstances too property-orientated and they would have to maintain yet another mortgage.

If David and Edward are going to stay in their current property for a number of years, then they should look to renegotiate their mortgage. But

any arrangement is going to tie them in for a length of time, so they need to make sure that this links in with their plans for moving.

David has some £32,000 to invest. My advice is that he should keep £5,000 for emergencies. This should be kept in a high-interest account, such as the one offered by Standard Life Bank, which pays 6.96 per cent gross. This will suit them as they can make transfers by phone, even when in France.

With the rest, David should put his maximum £5,600 allowance into a PEP. As a first-time PEP investor, 50 per cent should be placed in the UK and 50 per cent internationally. Good providers include Fidelity and Perpetual. David has indicated that he would like to invest the money ethically. If this is a strong consideration, then he could invest his £5,600 in a PEP with NPI or Jupiter, which both have ethical funds.

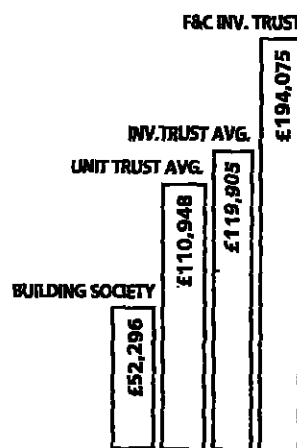
David could give £4,000 to Edward to top up his own Prudential PEP. This money could go, for instance, to a European fund. The track record of Prudential's European Fund has been fairly mediocre, but investors are allowed to choose only one PEP fund manager per year, which means either staying with Prudential or transferring to another provider. This can have significant new initial investment costs.

I suggest David pays off some of the mortgage with the remaining £17,000. He will not get the same return on his capital in a risk-free environment and it will also help reduce the couple's monthly outgoings.

Finally, as Edward and David are partners, there are some more issues to consider. Sensibly, they have made wills both in this country and in France, leaving property and assets to each other. Edward should check that the teacher's superannuation scheme allows him to name David as beneficiary in the event of his death - although, unfortunately, many public sector schemes do not allow non-married couples to receive their partners' pensions when they die.

Don't lose on penalties.

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Tax exile on Main St

The end of the Foreign Earnings Exemption is set to hit the little people hardest, says Nic Cicutti

MIX A FAMOUS rock band stuffed with 50-something millionaires with a Chancellor of the Exchequer determined to stamp out tax evasion and you have all the ingredients for a huge row.

Or so it proved earlier this week, after the Rolling Stones cancelled the British leg of their world tour, for which more than 300,000 tickets had already been sold, claiming that to carry on would land them with an additional £12m tax bill.

Mick Jagger said at the time: "It would have meant the entire European tour ran at a loss and we just couldn't do that. It would have been foolish."

Jagger's comments relate to a tax change which came into effect on Budget Day on March 17. Until then, British people who lived and worked abroad for more than a year were exempt from British taxes on their earnings, so long as they did not spend more than 62 days in this country. The scheme was introduced in 1977 by then Labour Chancellor, Denis Healey, and was known as the Foreign Earnings Exemption.

The aim was to encourage UK workers to work abroad for periods of up to 365 days - straddling more than one tax year - and pay no tax, without having to become non-resident in their own country.

Under the former system, bands were able to set up a firm to act as their employers. A record company then pays the firm rather than the group. The firm then pays the stars "salaries" which are tax-free if they are working outside the UK.

That concession has now been ended. Any UK resident who works in Britain at all during a tax year must pay tax here on their entire earnings - a change that is expected to raise £250m a year.

The Treasury, of course,



It won't be Mick who's clobbered

played the game brilliantly. The Stones were accused of being multi-millionaire whingers who were just out to avoid paying a few more pounds in tax. Hence the "exclusive" leaks to sympathetic journalists to the effect that the Rolling Stones barely pay more than 2.5p tax in the pound on their UK earnings.

The problem, however, is that it won't be Mick, Charlie, Keith and Ronnie who are clobbered by Gordon Brown's ending of the exemption.

John Whiting, a tax partner at Price Waterhouse, points out that those most affected by the change weren't the band members but their 270 roadies

working on the Road to Babylon tour.

Unlike the Stones, they aren't able to become non-resident and would have been hit by the retrospective change in tax law, even though they were already on tour when the Chancellor made his announcement.

Mr Whiting says: "The problem is that those most affected are construction workers, teachers, nurses and similar groups of workers who may have been on a one-year contract which straddled more than one tax year. If so, they would be liable to pay earnings on their tax in the current tax year."

Airline pilots and oil rig and

charity workers have also been among the 20,000-plus people exempted by this loophole.

"Unlike the Stones, they don't have the option of deciding that they will not return to the UK for another year," says Mr Whiting. "Nor are they likely to be able in future to ask for a contract to be offered in such a way that it straddles more than a tax year, say for 14 months from March to May the year after next, thus making them not liable to pay tax in the UK for the intervening 12 months."

In the US, a rule similar to that announced by Mr Gordon Brown applies also. But there, Mr Whiting says, the US Revenue has granted exemptions to those earning less than about \$70,000 US (about £48,000), allowing many of its citizens working abroad to escape the tax tawl.

However, Mr Whiting says Revenue officials he discussed the matter with have been adamant that this is one tax-avoidance loophole they are determined to close. No similar exemptions will apply here. "We have tried every argument, including the unfairness of making it retrospective, that those most affected would not be rich people and so on. I have to admit that we have not got very far," he adds.

The only hope may lie in what music the Chancellor listens to. If it is the Rolling Stones, we may be in with a very small chance.

Of course, the change does not affect just the Stones. Accountants for the Spice Girls, Elton John and Oasis are all reported to be planning protests. The Spice Girls alone stand to lose upwards of £2m from their tour - or stay out of the country for far longer periods of time. "Of course, some people may see that as a blessing in disguise," says Mr Whiting.



A sincere form of flattery

**Sotheby's
sale of
contemporary
Indian art shows
that copying is
not always a
crime. By
John Windsor**

WHAT MAKES Indian art so Indian is that so much of it looks European. In Sotheby's third annual sale of contemporary Indian paintings on Wednesday, there is a Miro by Sunil Das, a Modigliani by B Vithal, and Picassos by Chiavix Chavda, George Keyt and Krishna Shyamrao Kulkarni.

You could be excused for asking "Where is the real contemporary Indian painting?" It is, of course, the wrong question. This is it. If you view the sale, remember that you are entering a different culture - one in which copying is not a crime. A persistent force in India's artistic history is its craft tradition. For centuries, originality was not considered a virtue. Devoted students spent years copying their master's stylised images of Vedic deities. Even the master never signed his work.

Artistic originality, as we understand it, was let loose when the British founded art schools in Bengal and Madras in the middle of the last century. But their establishment, paradoxi-

cally, legitimised copying by Indians on a global scale.

For generations, Indian culture had preserved itself by adopting from foreign cultures whatever practices were compatible with its own, while rejecting the rest. It is a principal enshrined in the teachings of the Vedas. Without it, successive invasions by Aryans, Moguls, and finally the British, would have obliterated the Indianness of India.

Today, as members of the global village, Indian artists unashamedly draw from the artistic idioms of the world, whether it be Cubism, Chinese ink-and-brush, or their ancient, pre-Mogul flat-plane style.

It is no concern of Indian artists whether a style is ancient or modern. Like Indian historians of old, who recorded epic events but forgot the dates, Indian artists dip their brushes into art history as innocently as if they were choosing from different colours on their palette.

In the West, it is largely the dictates of fashion that condemn such copying as "derivative" art. Our view of history, art history, is in date order. Impressionism is history. Cubism is passé. So is Surrealism. Even trans-cultural Expressionism, adopted by artists in America, Germany and Britain in the Fifties, is old hat. With few exceptions - such as Desmond Morris's Surrealism - we don't paint in those styles any more.

But plenty of Indians do. As Sotheby's contemporary Indian painting consultant, Savita Apte, put it: "We were always post-modern before we were modern".

If you can bring yourself to ac-



'Reclining Woman II' (top) and 'Sri Krishna' (above) by George Keyt

cept the cosmopolitanism of Indian art as a virtue, rather than a vice, you will be amazed at the variety and exuberance of Sotheby's 227 lots. You will even find a few paintings that resemble our preconception of what Indian painting looks like - those brightly-coloured, sugar-sweet pictures of deities that are sold to tourists. That idiom is, in fact, Western academic realism. Raja Ravi Varma (1848-1906), having won (British) Governor's Gold Medals for his realistic paintings in the 1870s, went on to found a chromolithographic workshop in Bombay.

Indians were painting in the natural-realist style as long ago as the 16th century, to please the Mogul invaders. So when we come across Indian flat-plane, perspectiveless paintings of deities, such as those of Jamini Roy (1887-1972), estimated from £200 in the sale, we recognise immediately that they hark back to pre-Mogul style. At least we know where he was at. His 'Krishna', gouache on card, is estimated £2,000-£3,000 in the sale.

In the West, we would not dream of linking contemporary examples of flat-plane

style to its origins in pre-Renaissance Byzantine painting. We would seek a more up-to-date art-historical link - such as Toulouse-Lautrec's borrowing of the style of Japanese prints for his posters.

It all goes to show that Western artists do copy - but do so surreptitiously. Our advertising posters are full of Surrealist and Cubist references. Even the cool, flat-plane figuratives of the American Alex Katz, bought by Charles Saatchi, are not the novelty they appear to be.

Whether Indian painting catches on in the West depends on whether we can shed preconceptions and make the appropriate aesthetic culture-shift. The market is buoyant - but 70 per cent of buyers are NRIs - non-resident Indians. Now is the time when they bring their families out of the heat of India to their smart houses in London and New York - and indulge in art-buying. In New York, the massive Herwitz collection, which put Indian painting on the map, sold in two Sotheby's auctions, 1995-6, shifted 96 per cent and 81 per cent by value. Sotheby's inaugural sale in London in 1996 sold 80 per cent by value and last year's sale - tucked into a general Indian sale - 73 per cent.

Names are beginning to emerge. The witty drawings of Jogen Chowdhury (born 1939) are rising in price. They resemble Bengal street market drawings - yet another idiom. Two examples are estimated £1,500-£2,500 in the sale. Some of the drawings of Ganesh Pyne (born 1937) look like stream-of-consciousness paintings by the American Jean-Paul

Basquiat. But they draw on literary allegories from 16th- and 17th-century Indian literature. His work is full of double takes. On one he has written: "The crisis you have to worry about worst is the one you don't see coming". A Woody Allen witticism - or a reference to the ancient Vedic injunction to meditate in order to avoid "the danger that has not yet come"? Estimates from £800.

Best bet: the work of artists who best manage to integrate foreign styles with an unmistakable Indianness. The subtle watercolour "The Apple Girl of Swat" by Abdur Rahman Chughtai (1897-1975) adopts the flowing lines of Nouveau Art but could never be anything other than Indian. Estimate £10,000-£15,000. George Keyt (1901-1983) was capable of painting a slavishly Picassoesque "Reclining Woman III" (£4,000-£5,000) but also of drawing an enchanting "Sri Krishna" (£1,500-£2,500) using Picasso's richly lucid drawing technique to outline unmistakably Indian forms.

Kapil Jariwala, leading dealer in contemporary Indian paintings, has sold to the National Portrait Gallery their only portrait painting by an Indian - Bhupen Khakhar's "Salman Rushdie: The Moor" (1995). Khakhar (born 1934) paints homosexual themes. You can't get more Western than that.

Contemporary Indian and South Asian Paintings, Wednesday (2pm): Sotheby's, 34-35 New Bond Street, London W1 (0171 293 5000). Kapil Jariwala Gallery, 4 New Burlington Street, London W1 (0171 437 8121).



INTERNET INVESTOR ROBIN AMLOT

BRITAIN LEADS Europe in personal home computing and the Internet, according to a Global Consumer Study by the market research company Roper Starch Worldwide. Almost one in five of us already use PCs to do office work at home - more than anywhere else in Europe. We are also the most avid users of e-mail from home PCs, although the number of people with Internet access at home is still a small minority.

Nevertheless, Britain has a surprisingly high level of PC ownership: 38 per cent of the UK population aged between 18 and 65 have at least one computer at home (7 per cent have three or more). Furthermore, more than one in ten of us is likely to buy a computer for home use within the next 12 months.

Statistics like these, as much as optimistic forecasts about future web commerce, help explain why this week WH Smith purchased the Internet Bookshop for £2.8m and why the London Stock Exchange has established a new website as part of its £1m "Get Share Aware" advertising campaign.

The new Share Aware site aims to give private investors easy access to company news and share prices. Following an agreement between the Stock Exchange and 10 licensed data vendors who rank among the UK's leading providers of financial information, the website will offer share prices (mid, bid and offer prices) for all UK-listed, AIM (Alternative Investment Market) traded and SEAQ International companies.

You may also access company announcements transmitted via the Exchange's Regulatory News Service. The RNS carries all the announcements made by companies which are deemed to be price sensitive - those likely to move the share price. The information is available free of charge, subject to a 20-minute delay.

The website lists companies that offer share investment services and which are "member firms" of the London Stock Exchange. To

help you identify and contact organisations offering the services you are interested in, you can search on a number of categories including by region and by service offered, whether execution-only or for those firms offering discretionary or advisory services as well.

As part of the Share Aware campaign, the Stock Exchange has also published two booklets to guide potential private investors: *Being a Shareholder* and *A Guide to the London Stock Exchange - What You Need to Know*. You can view these on the website and order hard copies free of charge.

The Share Aware website runs alongside the London Stock Exchange's existing site which will continue to provide general information on the workings of the stock market in the UK. The wisdom of launching a campaign to attract more private investors at what appears to be the tail-end of a long bull-run in the market may be questionable. However, any initiative that seeks to boost investor understanding deserves some praise.

Among London Stock Exchange member firms, the newest arrival on the Internet is investment manager and stockbroker Carr Sheppards. Its site includes pages explaining the firm's services, including charity and pension fund private-client portfolio management. It also details Carr Sheppards' unit trust, investment trust and PEP management services.

In addition to the financial information available and an interview with the firm's chief executive, Fred Carr, the site links to the charity the National Gardens Scheme. Carr Sheppards sponsors the NGS book *Gardens of England and Wales* since 1994 and is backing the charity's website to boost its fund-raising capabilities.

Share Aware: www.share-aware.co.uk; London Stock Exchange: www.londonstockexchange.co.uk; Carr Sheppards: www.carrsheppards.co.uk

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BRIAN TORA

A good dividend income gives something of a parachute to a share

THOSE OF you who persevere to the end of these articles will see that I am described as the chairman of the Greig Middleton investment strategy committee. Actually, that statement is slightly misleading. We now have two committees that review our overall investment strategy - a stock selection committee and one charged with determining asset allocation. But have you ever wondered what exactly is involved?

Our two committees met this week, so now is a good time to reflect upon what goes on when you are trying to establish an investment strategy. Senior investment managers and analysts of this firm gather together to discuss the news that has emerged during the past few weeks, to look at the opinions of other respected investment houses and to try to give guidance to those charged with managing investments on behalf of private investors.

Ours is a long term approach. The cost of dealing and the tax implications of selling for many in this country will mean that we try not to change our mind too often or in any of our stance unless we are sure that a significant move is likely to take place. In this we are different to institutional investors, where costs are significantly lower and capital taxation is usually less of a problem. Just at present we are trying to determine how best to deliver a more defensive stance to portfolios.

Now, defensive is one of those words that will mean different things to different people. You could argue that the most defensive position you can take is to move your portfolio into cash. But most investment professionals will interpret a defensive posture as concentrating on those shares that are expected to hold up reasonably well against any market shake-out. In other words, if you consider share prices too high, but do not wish to be out of the market in case you are wrong and shares continue to move ahead, invest defensively.

And this is the paradox. Quite often a defensive portfolio will

under-perform in a bull market. More over, it is unrealistic to expect a portfolio constructed with a possible bare run in mind not to go down if the bottom falls out of the market. The hope is that it will not fall in value that much. But remember, this type of relative performance simply means that you lose less money than if you invested aggressively.

So, how do you invest defensively these days? Yield counts. A good dividend income gives something of a parachute to a share, providing the yield is not a reflection of a likely dividend cut, of course. Utilities fall into this category. So do some out-of-favour sectors, such as diversified industrials. But there is no guarantee that these sectors will prove as defensive as once they were. So much depends on why a market turns down.

Traditional domestic earners, like supermarket groups, have also been considered defensive investors in the past. The profits of companies like this look less vulnerable to an economic downturn. However, again, traditional wisdom may not be necessary hold good for the future.

But one area that could prove to be defensive in the next bare market are the smaller to the mid-cap stocks. Already the FTSE mid-250 is starting to outperform the top 100 share index. Professional investors seeking value have been sited as the reason for this and it is true that smaller companies now tend to offer the higher yields and low earning multiples that are no longer obtainable in the UK's 100 largest companies.

Moreover, there could be one interesting side effect of the next bare market. Just as indexed portfolios have helped drive the share prices of Britain's leading companies higher, so a market fall could be exacerbated by investors withdrawing their money from the same tracker funds. Concentrating on the shares outside the FTSE-100 might be the best defensive play you could make at present.

Brian Tora is chairman of the Greig Middleton investment strategy committee.

BEST BORROWING RATES

Telephone	% Rate and period	Max. amt	Fee	Secured
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MORTGAGES

Fixed Rate	Telephone	% Rate and period	Max. amt	Fee	Secured
Scottham BS	0800 133149	0.95% for 1 year	95%	0.75%	Fixed for up to 10 yrs
Principality BS	0800 101110	5.40% to 5.80%	95%	0.25%	No high lending fee
Abbey National	0800 255100	5.95% to 6.10%	95%	0.25%	No high lending fee

VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES

Scartham BS	0800 133149	1.50% for 1 year	95%	£250	£250 rebate
Principality BS	0800 163617	4.40% to 4.80%	90%	£295	No high lending fee
Hatfield	0800 101110	5.95% to 6.10%	90%	-	No high lending fee

FIRST TIME BUYERS FIXED RATES

Northam Bank	Telephone	% Rate and period	Max. amt	Fee	Secured
Northam Bank	0845 605 0500	3.85% to 4.20%	95%	0.25%	No high lending fee
Northam Bank	0800 101110	5.95% to 6.10%	95%	0.25%	No high lending fee

FIRST TIME BUYERS VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES

Northam Bank	Telephone	% Rate and period	Max. amt	Fee	Secured
Northam Bank	0845 605 0500	4.70% to 5.00%	95%	0.25%	No high lending fee
Northam Bank	0800 101110	5.95% to 6.10%	95%	0.25%	No high lending fee

UNSECURED PERSONAL LOANS

Unsecured	Telephone	APR %	Fixed monthly payments on £5K over 3 yrs
Unsecured	0845 421421	12.5% H	£103.11
Unsecured	0800 202122	12.5% A	£103.77
Unsecured	0181 680 9966	12.5% A	£103.77

SECURED LOANS (SECOND CHARGE)

Secured Loans (Second Charge)	Telephone	APR %	Max. LTV Advance	Term
Citywide Bank	0800 240024	9.7%	80%	5 to 25 years
Royal Bank of Scotland	0800 121121	10.7%	70%	5 to 25 years
First Direct	0845 100100	11.2%	80%	Up to 40 years

OVERDRAFTS

Telephone	Account	Authorised	9 pm APR	9 pm APR
Alliance & Leicester	0800 956565	Alliance	12.00%	2.25%
Bank of Scotland Direct	0800 904040	Direct charge	11.0%	25.25%
Halifax BS	0800 302010	Flexiaccount	12.2%	2.10%

CREDIT CARDS

Telephone	Card Type	Rate	APR %	Annual fee	First Mile Income
Capital One Bank	0800 680000	Visa	0.565% to 0.595%	Nil	54 days
RBS Advance	0800 077770	Visa	0.64% to 0.67%	Nil	50 days
Halifax BS	0800 302010	Visa	0.69% to 0.72%	Nil	52 days

GOLD CARDS

Telephone	Card Type	Rate	APR %	Annual fee	First Mile Income
Capital One Bank	0800 680000	Visa	0.565% to 0.595%	Nil	54 days
Co-operative Bank	0845 212121	Bank Rate Visa	0.60%	12.25%	40 days
RBS Advance	0800 077770	Visa	0.64% to 0.67%	Nil	50 days

STORE CARDS

Telephone	Payment by direct debit	Payment by other methods
John Lewis	1.35%	1.35%
Dea	1.85%	2.15%
Marks & Spencer	1.97%	2.15%

A - Minimum age 22 yrs. Holders of comprehensive motor insurance policy or lender's existing customers.
APR - Annualised percentage rate.
AGU - Accident, sickness and unemployment insurance.
B+C - Buildings and contents insurance.
H - Higher rate applies if insurance not arranged.
LTV - Loan to value.
MIP - Mortgage indemnity premium.
N - Introductory rate for a limited period.
U - Unemployment insurance.

* All completion is before 31.3.98.
All rates subject to change without notice. Source: MONEYFACTS 01603 476476 11 June 1998

BEST SAVINGS RATES

Telephone	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest
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INSTANT ACCESS

Citywide Bank	Telephone	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest
Citywide Bank	0800 445555	Savings	Instant	£1	6.75%	City
Westminster	0800 222222	Card Saver	Instant	£50	6.50%	City
Standard & London BS	0845 413663	Branch Saver	Instant	£100	6.00%	City
Leeds & Halifax BS	0800 225777	Branch Saver	Instant	£1,000	7.00%	City

INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS

Standard Life Bank	Telephone	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest
Standard Life Bank	0345 555555	Direct Access	Instant (7)	£1	7.25%	City
Safeway	0800 955555	Direct Saver	Instant (6)	£1	7.25%	City
First National BS	0800 558444	Direct Access	Instant	£5,000	7.50%	City
Wardlaw Bank	0845 500 6767	Save Instant Direct	Instant (5)	£5,000	7.00%	City

NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS

Leeds & Halifax BS	Telephone	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest
Leeds & Halifax BS	0800 225777	Admiral 30	30 Day (7)	£25,000	7.00%	City
Standard Life Bank	0345 555555	30 Day Notice	30 Day (7)	£1	7.25%	City
Legal & General BS	0800 112200	80 Direct 4	80 Day (9)	£25,000	7.00%	City
Legal & General BS	0800 112200	80 Direct 4	80 Day (9)	£10,000	6.00%	City

CHEQUE ACCOUNTS

Investment Bank (UK)	Telephone	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest
Investment Bank (UK)	0171 333 1850	HCA 5000	Instant	£5,000	6.40%	City
Halifax	0115 225 0223	Asset Reserve	Instant	£10,000	5.50%	City
Cheltenham BS	0800 429429	Classic Postal	Instant	£10,000	6.00%	City
Leopold Joseph	0171 558 2323	Instant Access	Instant	£10,000	6.00%	City

FIXED RATE BONDS

Northam Bank	Telephone	Account	Fixed Rate Bond	Term	Rate %	Interest
Northam Bank	01733 372222	Fixed Rate Bond	6 Month	£5,000	7.50%	City
Westminster	0800 222222	Premier Fixed Rate	28.25%	£10,000	7.50%	City
Paragon BS	0800 807000	Branch Fixed Rate Bond	1 Year	£5,000	7.50%	City
Citywide Bank	01852 841000	Peak Bond 12	31.25%	£5,000	7.50%	City

FIRST TESSAS

Northam Bank	Telephone	Account	Fixed Rate Bond	Term	Rate %	Interest
Northam Bank	01733 372222	Fixed Rate Bond	6 Month	£5,000	7.50%	City
Standard & London BS	0800 225777	Fixed Rate Bond	6 Month	£5,000	7.50%	City
Standard & London BS	0800 225777	Fixed Rate Bond	6 Month	£5,000	7.50%	City
Standard & London BS	0800 225777	Fixed Rate Bond	6 Month	£5,000	7.50%	City

FOLLOW-ON TESSAS

Leeds & Halifax BS	Telephone	Account	Fixed Rate Bond	Term	Rate %	Interest
Leeds & Halifax BS	0800 225777	Fixed Rate Bond	6 Month	£5,000	7.50%	City
Standard & London BS	0800 225777	Fixed Rate Bond	6 Month	£5,000	7.50%	City
Standard & London BS	0800 225777	Fixed Rate Bond	6 Month	£5,000	7.50%	City
Standard & London BS	0800 225777	Fixed Rate Bond	6 Month	£5,000	7.50%	City

GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS (net)

GE Financial Assurance	Telephone	Account	Fixed Rate Bond	Term	Rate %	Interest
GE Financial Assurance	0161 300388	Fixed Rate Bond	1 Year	£10,000	6.42% PA	City
Hamilton Assurance	0800 680000	Fixed Rate Bond	2 Year	£5,000	5.80% PA	City
Hamilton Assurance	0800 680000	Fixed Rate Bond	3 Year	£5,000	5.81% PA	City
ITT London & Edinburgh	01905 828280	Fixed Rate Bond	4 Year	£5,000	5.50% PA	City
Hamilton Assurance	01905 828280	Fixed Rate Bond	5 Year	£5,000	5.50% PA	City

OFFSHORE ACCOUNTS (gross)

Deutsche International	Telephone	Account	Fixed Rate Bond	Term	Rate %	Interest
Deutsche International	01624 811168	Capital Value Direct	Instant	£10,000	7.00%	City
British & West Ind Ltd	01176 800702	Instant Access	Instant	£50,000	7.50%	City
Deutsche Int'l Ltd	01624 811168	90 Day Notice	90 Day	£10,000	7.50%	City
Birmingham Miles (Bank)	0121 481 700000	Deutsche 90	90 Day	£50,000	8.50%	City

NATIONAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS (gross)

Investment Accounts	Telephone	Account	Fixed Rate Bond	Term	Rate %	Interest
Investment Accounts	01438 744555	TESSA 2 Flex	5 Year	£1,000	8.00%	City
Investment Accounts	01438 744555	TESSA 2 Flex	5 Year	£1,000	8.00%	City
Investment Accounts	01438 744555	TESSA 2 Flex	5 Year	£1,000	8.00%	City
Investment Accounts	01438 744555	TESSA 2 Flex	5 Year	£1,000	8.00%	City

B - Withdrawals via Bank Clearing System

F - Fixed rate (all other rates variable)
H - Not rate
P - By post only

All rates are shown gross and are subject to change without notice.
Source: MONEYFACTS 01603 476476

11 June 1998

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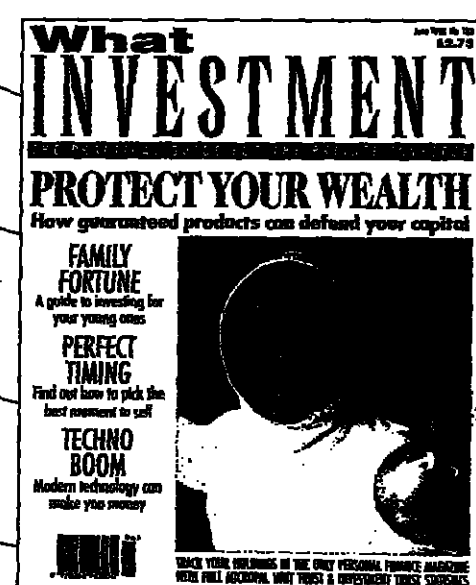
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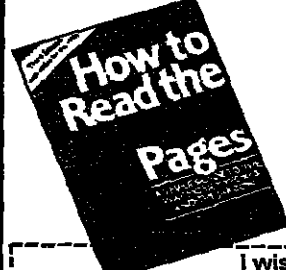
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MONEY & ETHICS



Campaigners claim starvation in Africa is made worse by some banks' Third World loans

A hole in the wall machine with principles

Banks with a social conscience are few and far between, but they can still be found, writes Iain Morse

ANYONE who has searched in vain for a cashpoint machine on a wet Friday night knows that personal banking is as much about convenience as anything else. Instant access, credit, loans, cheque guarantee cards, overdrafts - it's difficult to imagine life without them.

The cost of this convenience is met partly from ruthless competition, staff redundancies, cutting overheads, the elimination of high street branches, all part of a trend to globalisation among large, retail banks. Profits, when they come, can be at the expense of human beings all over the world, or the environment in which we live.

Participating in this system as a consumer seems unavoidable, but raises difficult issues for the ethically minded. While selecting ethical investments on the basis of activities the banks avoid or support is relatively clear cut, the same cannot be said when selecting personal banking facilities.

The main reason for this lies in the way that our banking system has evolved. Large clearing banks now make most of their profits not from the services they offer to consumers but by investing and lending money directly to large companies or through the international money markets.

Faced with this, an ethically minded saver will want to question just where and to whom a particular bank lends money. But answers are difficult to obtain. Banks defend the confidentiality of their commercial operations for competitive reasons. This makes selecting a bank by the areas of business it avoids almost impossible.

Much of the available information about which banks do what comes indirectly, through annual reports issued by public companies. For example, these show that Lloyds-TSB has acted as bankers to British American Tobacco (BAT), and provided banking services to British Aerospace, the UK's largest defence contractor.

The "big four" clearing banks - Lloyds, Barclays, Midland and NatWest are all involved in the provision of third world debt. Over the last three years, the Lloyds and Midland Boycott (Lamb) has put direct pressure on both banks over this issue. Account holders can join boycotts of this kind, penalising banks by moving their custom, but they will need to own shares in a bank and go to its AGM if they want to ask management difficult questions.

A handful of banks stand out as applying some ethical or environmental principles to their business activities. Among the larger clearing banks, Abbey National does not lend direct to companies, two-thirds of its business is UK based, and much of this is in domestic mortgages. The far smaller Triodos Bank offers a range of savings accounts, and reinvests only in organisations and businesses with social and environmental objectives. Examples include the "North South Plan", investment in fair-trade projects such as Cafédirect, which buys coffee from farmers' co-operatives at 10 per cent above the market price, reselling through UK supermarkets. Rates on this account start at 4 per cent for deposits of £300-plus, on 90 days' notice of withdrawal.

But while Triodos offers a range of accounts, including

Texas, it does not claim to provide a full range of personal banking services; it has no credit or cheque card facility, and account withdrawals must be made by cheque.

This Co-operative Bank more closely matches services offered by high street clearing banks, while maintaining an ethical stance in its conduct of business. According to Chris Smith, a spokesman: "About 40 per cent of our new account holders say they come to us because of our ethical stance."

The bank's ethical guidelines cover 13 positive and negative criteria, including avoidance of arms and tobacco manufacture, while its annual reports put emphasis on a commitment to environment and social issues. The bank also offers a full range of personal banking services at competitive rates and charges.

Among these are a range of "donation" credit cards, set up to benefit organisations such as Amnesty International and Greenpeace. Most of these charge a rate of monthly interest between 0.25 and 0.5 per cent higher than the bank's own card, with the excess going to the charity in question.

Mutually-owned building societies offer an alternative to banks, which ethically minded savers should find broadly acceptable. The 1997 Building Society Act specifies that no less than 75 per cent of a society's business assets must be held in domestic property, usually in the form of mortgages.

In theory, the remaining 25 per cent could be invested into companies or international money markets. But John Barker, of Bradford & Bingley reckons: "Most of the busi-

ness-to-business lending by mutuals goes to housing associations, which are community-friendly by their nature." Because a mutual is owned by its members, issues of this kind can be raised and voted on at annual members' meetings.

The 1997 Act also enabled them to offer the same range of financial products and services as banks, such as credit cards, loans for purposes other than mortgages, foreign currency, travel and home insurance and instant access accounts. Most societies might pass a "negative screening" test - unless you object to their involvement in the housing market. But only two stand out for following "positive" criteria on lending.

The Ecology Building Society offers savings accounts with money reinvested into ecological projects and lent for mortgages involving the renovation of derelict property. Meanwhile, the Catholic Building Society focuses on offering mortgages to first-time buyers, often women on low incomes.

Rob Harrison, editor of the *Ethical Investor* magazine, argues that there are deeper reasons for choosing a mutual against a bank: "They are our last line of defence against the final globalisation of banking and credit. The multinational banks replacing them are impossible to control." The growing choice these ethical institutions offer make it easier to assert customer priorities against the global banking system.

Triodos Bank, 0500 008 720; Co-operative Bank, 0161 832 3456; Ecology BS, 0345 697758; Catholic BS, 0171 222 6736; Ethical Consumer Magazine, 0161 237 1630

Economic forecasts are as precise as the weather

RICHARD NIXON may not have been America's most elegant or articulate president, but in economic matters he did enjoy one great advantage over many of his more agreeable successors: he did know what he wanted.

Told on one occasion that he should be concerned about the potential impact of a policy initiative on the Italian currency, he memorably replied, "I don't give a f*** about the lira", which was honest, if a little short of being diplomatic.

On another occasion, he stepped up to introduce the man he had nominated as chairman of the Federal Reserve, the economist Arthur Burns. "I respect his independence," he told the assembled company at the White House ceremony. "However, I hope that independently he will conclude that my views are the ones that should be followed."

When this was greeted with a round of applause, he smiled and turned to the new Fed chairman: "You see, Dr Burns, that is a standing vote for lower interest rates and more money."

On that occasion, most contemporary historians agree, the central banker may have taken the implied advice of the President, an old friend of his, rather too seriously. The lax policies which Burns presided over contributed to the economic recovery which helped to get Nixon re-elected in 1972, but they proved something of a disaster thereafter, as the US economy slid into inflation and towards the great economic crisis of the mid-1970s.

Even before Opec ratcheted up the price of oil, there was simply too much easy money around and prices generally moved out of control. Arthur Burns left office with a much lower reputation than he enjoyed when he first took over.

We have been luckier with his successors, but it has still taken 20 years for all western countries to come to the con-



THE JONATHAN DAVIS COLUMN

clusion that a genuinely independent central bank is a necessary bulwark against the insidious incursion of inflation.

When the new Labour Government, as one of its first acts last year, handed control over interest rates to an independent monetary policy committee at the Bank of England, it was a welcome sign that this new orthodoxy had spread a long way across the political spectrum.

Investors in particular have paid a high price for allowing governments to manipulate interest rates in the past. Politicians are always likely to find themselves, like Nixon, erring on the side of easy money, in the knowledge that the bill for lax monetary control need not come in until at least two years later - which often (strange coincidence) happens to be after the next election.

The markets were right to take a positive view of the decision to hand control of interest rates to the Bank of England. The decision has clearly been a factor in the continued strength of the market over the past 15 months and the continued decline in inflationary expectations over the same period. But the mistake that many investors make, as we have again seen this week, is to believe that the act of making the central bank independent

is in itself a solution to the problem of inflation and erratic growth. It is not - and for a simple reason.

That reason is that determining the right interest rate policy is extremely difficult. Quite apart from the fact that interest rates are a very blunt instrument, which affect different groups of society in different ways, it is also perfectly possible for highly learned and reasonable experts to study the evidence and come to completely different conclusions, not just about what to do, but even about what is happening to the economy in the first place.

Economies are complex social systems, and judging where we are at any stage in the cycle with any degree of precision is effectively - and unfortunately - unknowable. That is one reason why economists' forecasts - just like weather forecasts - tend on balance to be wrong so often: there simply is no clear-cut answer, except, of course, in hindsight.

What matters most is not who is making the interest rate decisions, but whether or not he/she (or they, if it is a committee) are able to come up with the right answers. To put together a track record as a successful policymaker in this area, you need luck and judgement, as well as economic expertise.

Alan Greenspan, the current chairman of the Federal Reserve, the US central bank, has enjoyed a quite extraordinary record of success in the past few years. The US economy has never before enjoyed such a long run of continuous growth allied to low to non-existent inflation. There are times, it is clear, when even Mr Greenspan wonders how it has all been achieved, since he knows that while the press likes to portray him as omniscient, the reality is very different. He has much trouble at calling the runes as most of the rest of us do.

In the UK, the new monetary policy committee which now sets interest rates in

this country seems to be having a similar difficulty. This week it put up interest rates again by 0.25 per cent, despite the fact that only a few weeks ago it seemed to have come to the conclusion that interest rates had risen far enough to choke off any serious risk of inflation exceeding its 2.5 per cent target.

The minutes of last month's meeting (also published this week) reveal that at the time, while the majority of the committee's seven members favoured a cautious wait-and-see policy, one of its members wanted an interest rate rise and another believed an interest rate cut was more appropriate.

Both the dissenters were, you won't be surprised to hear, economists - and we know they cannot agree on anything. Even so, while many professionals in the market say they are puzzled by the latest interest rate rise (which most had not expected), my view is that it may actually be a good thing that the committee is so divided in its opinion. (Anyone, incidentally, who wants to can now read the minutes on the Internet and judge for themselves where the argument lies. The web site address is <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk>.)

The important thing to note is that so far the committee seems to be doing its job reasonably well. While short-term interest rates (the ones set by the Bank of England) are rising, long-term interest rates remain at their lowest levels for many years. Inflation expectations (as implied by the price of gilts) are also still on a downward trend. This remains a favourable backdrop for investors. The time to start worrying in earnest is when the situation reverses.

Easy money today and rising long-term interest rates are what Arthur Burns delivered all those years ago in response to Richard Nixon's plea. Not a happy combination - but one which still today seems remote.

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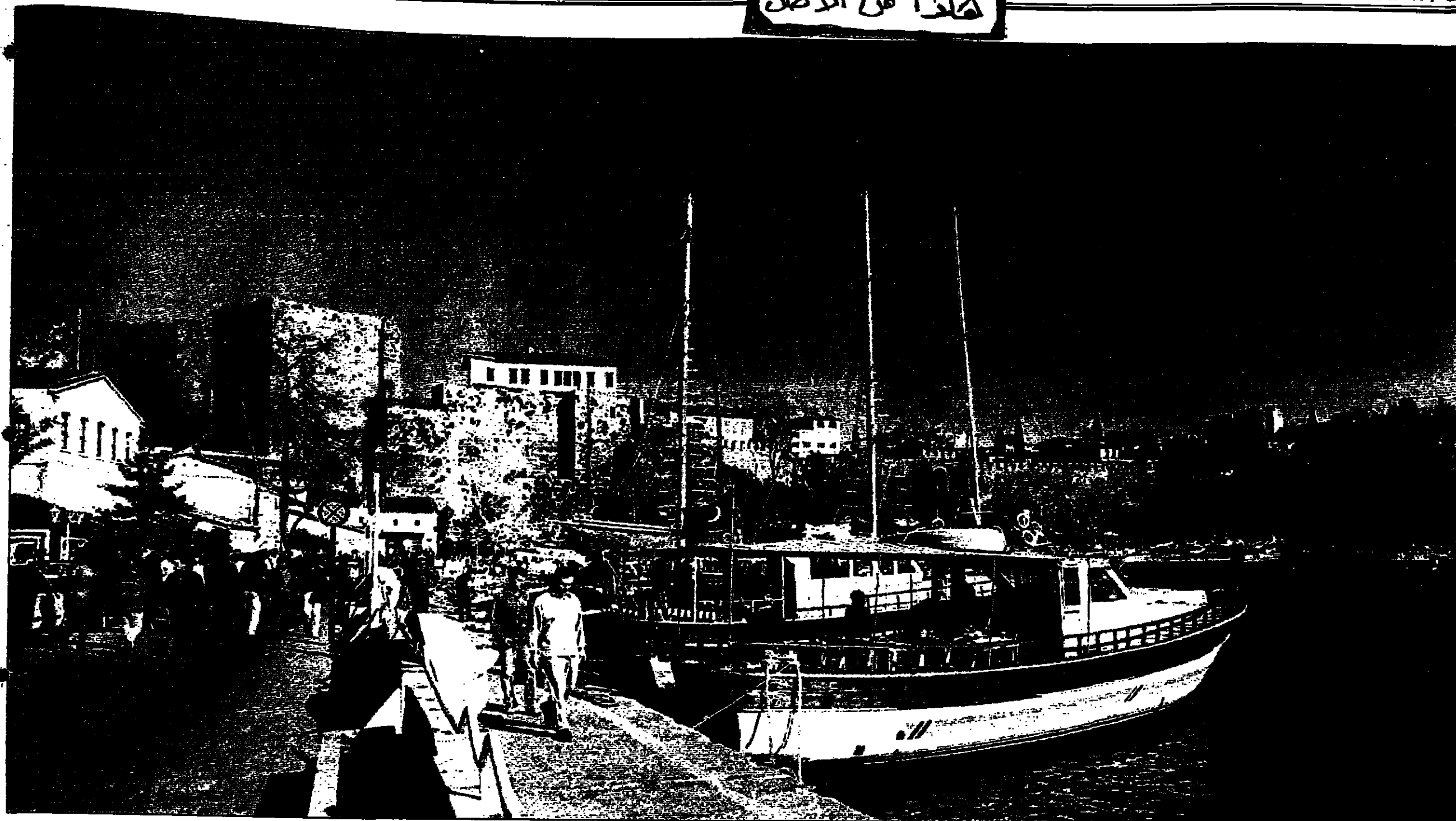
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Holiday decisions to regret

Under a scorching sun the dreams start of a little place in the Mediterranean. But trying to make that a reality can be a sobering experience for legal novices, says Mary Wilson

EDWARD AND JENNIFER BEVIS have learnt the hard way about paying for a property in a foreign country - before it is built. After nine years of trials and tribulations, the couple have ended up losing £25,000 and their dream holiday home.

"We wanted to buy a retirement home in the Mediterranean and in 1989 attended several exhibitions and shows to see what was available," says Jennifer. "A salesman from Tavernstar, an agent in Surrey, approached us with properties in Turkey, and, as they were much cheaper than France or Spain, we agreed to go on a four-day inspection trip and we found ourselves in Bodrum within the week."

They saw a wide range of properties at different stages of completion and eventually fell in love with the magnificent view from a hill

side overlooking Bodrum. If they wanted to buy this one, they would have to do so "off-plan", based on architects' drawings and before it was built. "The plans seemed to have been carefully drawn up by the developers, whose company was registered in Istanbul," she says.

The villa, which was still a hole in the ground, was going to cost them £32,934 with an initial deposit of £1,000. "We were quite careful," says Edward. "We found a Turkish solicitor in England to look over the contract and we thought we were well covered in Turkey. But we eventually discovered we were badly misinformed. We were told the developer owned the land and the reason for the property costing a bit more than usual was because of its position, which we could understand."

They gave their power of attorney to Pozcu & Collard, the Turkish agents for Tavernstar. Having paid their deposit, a sales contract was drawn up, at which time the first instalment of £12,174 was paid. But, when they visited Bodrum, in spring 1990, the foundations had hardly been laid.

They were told that the building would be finished on time and, in January 1991, paid a second instalment of £9,890. In April, they were told the villa was being plastered, but in August 1991 it transpired that the development company did not have the money to continue the project and two landowners - whom they previously knew nothing about - had placed a lien on the properties going up on the site to protect their interests.

The landowner was unable to be

located and, at the end of the year, he died after a car accident. The inheritance laws proved to be insurmountable. Pozcu & Collard closed their Bodrum offices and, after trying many avenues to retrieve their money, the Bevises gave up.

"Although we were advised to sue Pozcu & Collard, we were reluctant to become involved in costly litigation," says Edward.

There are several lessons to be learnt from this sad story. "You should never sign a contract with anyone who is not the vendor and, when handing over money, you should make sure that it is given to a notary or someone who has a client account so the money cannot be touched," says Steve Emmett, of Brian A French agents and a former chairman of Fopdac (the Federation of Overseas Prop-

erty Developers and Consultants). Fopdac has no agents registered with it in Turkey. "We took a look at Turkey some years ago and decided not to get involved. Claims to freehold title were not sustainable, and I was amazed to see people offering freehold title," says Mr Emmett - a situation the Bevises were obviously not aware of.

Title of land and property should always be carefully checked. In Italy, where Brian A French sells property, all title is registered, so anyone can check the owner of land and property and whether there is a mortgage on it. Not making the correct checks could mean finding out that you have mortgage repayments to make of which you knew absolutely nothing about.

Title is similarly registered in Spain and Portugal, and there is con-

sumer legislation that protects a purchaser from a developer going bankrupt. "The developer gets a bank guarantee or insurance, so, if the worst happens, any monies which have been paid over will be recompensed," says Michael Cornish, of Cornish & Co, a solicitor specialising in property purchases in Spain and Portugal. You might have to pay an insurance premium, but it is well worth doing.

"You should, of course, always see a solicitor who specialises in the area you are buying in. A reputable solicitor will make all the title checks before you hand over any money," says Mr Cornish. All reputable estate agents in Spain and Portugal are licensed, and Fopdac can also provide a list of its members.

"The difficulty is that people get very excited about buying property

when on holiday and are easily parted with their money," Mr Cornish says. "The saying goes: 'When the sun comes out, the brains go in.' And, no matter how many times you tell them, people still come to us when it is too late. They are offered an option agreement, that they are expected to sign on the spot, which forms an agreement. There is little we can do about it, except carry out all the searches and hope that nothing untoward shows up."

Edward and Jennifer Bevis have certainly learnt their lesson: "We will never, ever again buy a property off-plan. We would only consider something if it was completed and ready to move into."

Brian A French: 0171-284 0114. Fopdac: 0181-941 5588. Cornish & Co: 0181-478 3300.

An office in the sticks can be heaven or hell

Modern technology makes it easy, in theory, to escape the pressures of city living and work from a rural idyll. But all may not be as straightforward as it first appears, says Mary Wilson

IF YOU are fed up with living and working in the city, with all the accompanying stress, pollution and parking problems, it can be tempting to think about moving out to the sticks. Here, all the country lovers will tell you, you can work from the comfort of your home - modern communications making it as easy as flicking a switch. But when looking for the house of your dreams, which will become your workplace as well, there are a number of pitfalls to watch out for which you might not think about until it is too late.

Amanda MacCaw, a public relations consultant, lived and worked in London until last year, when she got married and decided to make a weekend cottage in Warwickshire her and her husband's main home. In London, Amanda had worked from Chesterons Residential, one of her clients, so was used to the machinery of a

large office to back her up. "I now work from a converted garage about 20 yards from the house," she says. "There are several things I hadn't thought about. Post is a great problem - it rarely gets here the next day and the last post in the village is 3.30 in the afternoon. I either have to be incredibly organised or build in to my day the time to drive to the post office."

"You need to make sure you have all the kit you need - running out of fax rolls in London is no problem, in the country it means a major journey or waiting a day for them to be delivered. Machinery going wrong is also fairly worrying."

To work from home, you have to think ahead. When you make a stationary order, you need to check through everything you might need in the next few weeks - putting in an order for just one thing could mean you have to pay carriage charges.



Working in an environment that is physically out of the home is often far better than converting the spare bedroom

"My first major crisis was when the toner for my printer ran out. I found a spare one, but discovered to my horror it was the wrong one. I had to waste an hour driving into town to buy another one," says Amanda. Another difficult day followed when the electricity was cut off. "Since then we have had quite a few electricity cuts, but

there is nothing I can do about it. When it first happened, I thought, well, I can't use my computer or fax machine, so I'll spend the day on the phone. But then I remembered my database was on my computer, so I could only call people I knew the number of."

"However, the benefits far outweigh the negative points.

My quality of life is much better and, in a productive sense, I work much more efficiently. There is nobody to bother me and I don't waste time travelling to and from work."

Working in an environment that is physically out of the home, such as a garden shed or garage, is often far better than converting the spare bedroom. Not only

are you removed from home demands - washing, cleaning or making that extra cup of coffee, you can mentally detach yourself from home more easily - especially if you have children.

Even working in London can have its problems. Deborah Battsek discovered, when she moved from central London to East Sheen, that there were no

10 TIPS ON WORKING FROM HOME

- Install a business phone line, rather than a private one. It costs £9.33 a quarter extra, but there are more discounts available and if your phone or fax go on the blink, the service is remarkably faster.
- Be prepared to spend more on heating and electricity if you are working from a converted shed or garage.
- Make sure you are always well stocked with stationery.
- Make a list of local people who can help in a crisis.
- Use travelling times properly for working or sleeping, depending on which is required most.
- Don't forget to add your equipment to your house contents insurance policy.
- If you are in a service industry, be prepared to go to clients rather than the other way round.
- Be prepared to pay more for fast replacements to save lost working hours.
- Keep paper records of all your database for emergencies.
- Be organised - it's the only way to work from home efficiently.

post boxes within ten minutes' walk which would take hard-backed A4 envelopes.

"And my most important investment was a weighing machine for letters. This has made all the difference to my life. Beforehand, I spent so much time queuing at the post office."

Paul Greenwood, managing director of Stacks Relocation (01666 860523), has been asked by many city people to search for a house they can work from in the country. "I would advise caution before relocating to the sticks and relying on modern technology for all your business needs," he says.

"Ninety-five per cent of your business may be conducted by

phone, fax and the superhighway, but ask yourself some searching questions before committing yourself," he says.

"Does the area have good mobile-telephone reception, find out about the postal service and what about photocopying? If yours breaks down, or you don't have one, you need to know where the nearest service is."

So choosing a home from which you intend to work needs to be thought about very carefully. If you pick somewhere from which it is easy to operate and where there are back-up facilities close by, your life will be heaven. Find a house miles from anywhere and your working life could be more like hell.



PENNY JACKSON

IT DOES seem more than a little surprising that after all the talk of conservation and sympathetic building in the countryside, an Exmoor village should be fighting plans for a development of houses more suited to suburban Surrey than rural Somerset.

Roadwater, a long straggly village, has a character that would be altered by the building of 12 executive-type homes on an open plot at its heart. Local residents are pinning their hopes on changes being made to the plans. They argue it is not "Nimbyism" - they would welcome smaller houses, even a mixed use, but nothing on the present scale, which even includes pavements and street lighting.

Where they are not alone is in suffering from a bad planning decision made in less sensitive times. It contravenes Exmoor's most recent policies and Neil Pope, its planning officer, agrees that it would not be approved today and clearly hopes to salvage what he can from the ill-thought-out situation he has inherited.

John Nethercott, for the Council for the Protection of Rural England in West Somerset, says it is the last big site on Exmoor and should produce something of which the village could be proud.

So despite pronouncements from the Government, conservationists and planners, the Roadwaters of this world must go into the next century with a scheme in tow that everyone, bar the developer, deprecates. There is always, of course, a way out through compensation. Who would pay it, though, is the argument. So what better way for a Millennium Fund to spend its money than to buy out a horrible mistake that could end up as a permanent memorial to 20th century insensitivity.

MORE scenes of buyers queuing to snap up well priced flats in London, but this time it is to the east of the city. At Greenwich Heights, a 10-storey block with views over the City and the Millennium Dome, half the entire first phase went under offer last weekend at prices from £49,000 to £114,500. As a result, the second phase has been brought forward from the autumn to this weekend. Agents FPD Savills: 0171-456 6800.

COUNTRY cottages, which for a while represented better value for money than larger country houses earmarked by affluent Londoners, have been increasing in price recently. In Hampshire, where thatched cottages have always commanded a premium, there are two Grade II-listed properties on the market through agents Lane Fox. Asking price for Box Cottage in Upper Wield is £235,000 and for Queens Meadow in Monk Sherborne, £325,000.

Just add another room and you should be able to let it



Helene Glucksman and her children are happy in their new home, though they do have some reservations

Nicola Kurtz

Americans may pay a fortune to rent your house, but they find English homes leave much to be desired. Penny Jackson explains how to make Uncle Sam happy

ANYONE rubbing their hands in glee at the prospect of letting their house to Americans during a stint abroad might have to swallow hard before banking a mouthwatering rent.

More likely than not it's out with the carpet, out with the expensive wallpaper and out with the paintbrush. American tenants may be prepared to pay more than £3,000 a month, but only if they get exactly what they want.

Big, bland and beige, says one agent who has the "wish list" imprinted on her mind. Even though there is competition for family houses, second-best doesn't enter the vocabulary of Americans with a corporate budget.

First-timers in the UK are all struck by the same shortcomings of the English home, and what as guests they are happy to tolerate, as tenants they are not. They wonder, not unreasonably, why life is so unnecessarily uncomfortable.

"All the Brits tell you that there are no bugs here, but there are," was Helene Glucksman's first discovery. "I had been warned but I'm amazed there are no screens on the windows. We had this flying monster the other day which we tried to flush down the toilet. It didn't go, of course, and

that's another thing - the plumbing.

"You don't have mixers on the taps, so there is a tiny window of opportunity before your hand gets burnt off," says Mrs Glucksman. But the shortage of space couldn't be laughed off as easily as the threat from biting insects. "We took the house on condition that a third reception room was added. So a new extension has been built and the cloakroom redone," she explains.

She and her husband and their two sons have taken a house in Weybridge, Surrey, and expect to be in England for four years, long enough to find the loss of family living space more than a minor irritation. "We loved the house apart from that, and we saw everything from the impeccable to houses so terrible I couldn't believe they were on the market. You just have to get used to things being so much smaller."

She might have added expensive, as rents, such as the £4,000 a month paid for their house, can be twice as

much as they would pay in the States.

Victoria Lamb, of Oak Residential Lettings, whose business is virtually all with Americans, says they expect an increasing number of investors are buying houses between £300,000 and £400,000 and Americanising them. They can expect a return of at least 10 per cent gross a year.

Terry Inskip, of Hampton International's Sunningdale office, has learnt to be tactful with owners. "If I went into a typical family house and reeled off all the things that need doing, they wouldn't go any further. But at the very least they will have to replace a bathroom carpet with a washable floor; put pumps on showers, build in cupboards and upgrade kitchens."

She gives an example of a delightful house in a quiet spot being impossible to let because the kitchen was out of date and the bath pink.

"Only when we persuaded the owner to spend money on replacing them could we find a tenant."

"People can let their houses for as much as £3,500 a month in Sunningdale, and in areas close to American schools and London airport an increasing number of investors are buying houses between £300,000 and £400,000 and Americanising them. They can expect a return of at least 10 per cent gross a year."

That is, as long as it's not old and charming on the inside as well out. In that case it is doomed to sit on the unwanted list.

"Even when you explain to some Americans what to expect, they are still amazed. 'Most will laugh and try to renegotiate their package but a few will say to hell with England and refuse to work here at all,' says Ms Inskip."

In St John's Wood, north London, Linda Dempster from Denver, Colorado, is still struggling with living on three floors and too many stairs. "There is never enough storage space, the bathrooms are too

small and as for the size of the refrigerator..."

Under-the-worktop fridges have always had Americans in fits of laughter and they will find space somewhere in the house for the double-door US model. "We know how lucky we are with this house, though," says Mrs Dempster.

The Dempsters rent the carriage house of what was the Cuban embassy through John D Wood. The agency's Dawn Shepperson finds that long-established Americans often do the best selling job. "They'll say things like 'this is a closet but here they call it a bedroom', but while joking about the house they also bring some people down to reality."

It is not always easy to sell the idea of a four-storey town house to someone used to thousands of square feet of open-plan rooms. "I wedge all the doors open before showing Americans around and try to let as much light in as possible."

They pay enough not to want to compromise and often bring their own furniture which can sit uncomfortably with daisy-patterned walls and squirrels on the carpet.

One British couple living abroad were horrified to be told by Ms Shepperson that the tenants wanted to replace their handpainted wallpaper with white emulsion. "They asked me whether I had any idea how much it cost. They gave in though."

One American woman has made 11 visits to the house she is merely considering renting for a year. On top of that she has paid for her interior decorator to travel from America twice in order to advise her where the furniture should be placed.

The odd extension here and the loss of handpainted walls there are financial hips set against the amounts that British owners can earn from American tenants.

But there are limits. When a family moving into a Surrey house asked Victoria Lamb to change the dull water in the garden pond so that it looked fresh and blue, she had to explain that it was a wildlife pond and that everything in it would die. "They told me 'Don't worry, we'll feed the fish.' We won that one, but they clearly thought it was mad."

The Home Counties are becoming decidedly cosmopolitan and landlords are delighted, reports Robert Liebman

Welcome to expatriate country

RAISING THE white flag is the only sensible option for most British families thinking of renting a house in the Home Counties. Hordes of multinational managers have invaded, and, in a war whose weapons consist exclusively of money, they are winning hands down. According to Canterbury estate agent Christopher Hodgson, "localised situations drive the lettings market. East Kent is driven by Pfizer Pharmaceuticals and Canterbury University, and west Kent is a dormitory for London". In the Surrey, Berkshire and Buckingham corridor, multinationals such as Sony and Procter & Gamble are the magnets, but "regardless of where the husband works, it is the school that determines where the family rents", says Terry Ward-Hall, of JSC Lettings, in Virginia Water.

The school is usually American, even if the family isn't. "For the international expatriate community, the one constant, regardless of which country they are sent to, is the American school," Mr Ward-Hall explains. Linda, a well travelled American who used to work for the Surrey multinational that employs her husband, confirms this view. "Our children's schools are pri-

marily American, but a total of 42 countries are represented."

In the early 1990s, Linda, Don and their three teenage children lived in a large rented Sunningdale house, until the recession meant that they and thousands like them were repatriated. When the recession ended, overseas placements picked up again, in even greater numbers. Back on English soil three years ago, Linda quickly saw the consequences of huge demand chasing limited supply. "We knew what the rents had been only a few years earlier, and they had gone up £2,000 a month."

Expats were so desperate that they immediately rented any property which was minimally acceptable. Some of the desperation is due to the constraints of corporate house-hunting. Despite excellent relocation support service provided by Don's firm, they had only one week in which to find and secure a home. Linda had become worried when "nothing seemed available except Virginia Park in Virginia Water. They call it the expat ghetto". However, they preferred Agas over Americans and rustic over suburban, and they were fortunate in



Linda and Don: "Even now, our friends ask us to notify them if we are leaving"

Nicola Kurtz

finding an ideal home at the last minute.

Other families were not so lucky. "We hear of many families who had enormous difficulty finding a nice house, and even now our friends ask us to notify them if we are leaving," Linda says. Even for them, a tenant's life can be fraught. "We have a lease, although not everyone does. The leases are typically for a year minus a day with renewal clauses. At renewal, the owner can come

back. I know people who have had to move every year."

Linda and Don have not been inconvenienced by returning landlords. But when the boss says it is time to up sticks, they have to do so, in fairly short order. "Minimum notice from Don's company is three months. That's the part that is hardest for the children." If they vacated now, Linda has no doubts that the house would be relet immediately and at a higher rent.

"After we left England in 1993, we heard that our house was vacant for nine months, but there are far more expats here now. The American Women of Surrey has about three times more members than when we were here before. Traditionally the wife follows the husband, but now I see more women managers coming, trailing husbands."

Many multinational firms contribute to at least part of the rent and, as the rents soar, they have little

choice but to do so. Victoria Lamb, of Oak Residential Lettings, in Weybridge, says that monthly rentals greater than £10,000 are not unusual, "and the going rate for 10,000 sq ft in the exclusive St Georges Hill, for example, is £15,000". Rent of £10,000-plus usually means a mansion, indoor swimming-pool and spacious grounds. More typical rents are in the £5,000-£10,000 range, and, these days, furniture may not be included. "Since the new fire regulations a few years ago, some landlords are starting to rent unfurnished properties, and many Americans are bringing their furniture with them," says Ms Lamb. Tenants and their employers are also pressuring landlords to provide longer leases. Ms Lamb says: "The typical lease used to be for six months or a year, but now people want to rent longer, they don't want to be chucked out after a year. Increasingly the company wants an employee to sign a lease with options to renew for a second and third year."

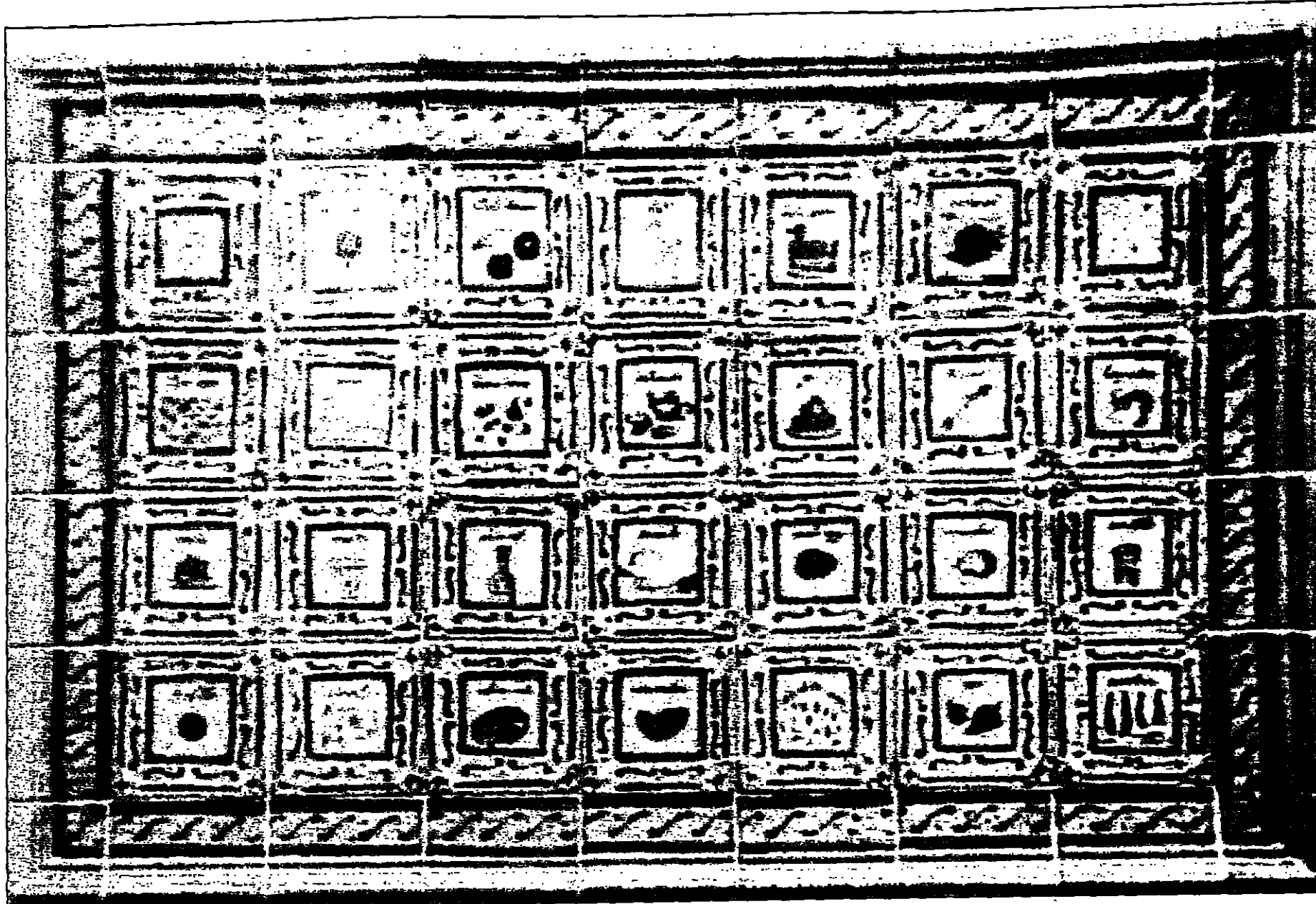
She also believes that some property owners are cheating themselves by harbouring old-fashioned views of the landlord-tenant battlefield. "More and more people

are coming over to work and live here, and landlords should realise that the law protects them today much more than in the past. Some landlords are all too well aware of the balance of forces. "I had a tenant who was so desperate to find a place that she agreed to rent a flat as soon as we opened the door. The landlord doesn't do any maintenance, and the tenant is doing the maintenance herself. Some landlords are taking advantage."

The few British renters in this area tend to be transients of one sort or another, says Fiona Honey, residential letting manager of Curchods. "They are between houses because of divorce or young couples just starting out or someone returning from an overseas posting. They expect to pay £1,000 or £1,200 maximum, and when they discover the extortionate amounts of the actual rents, they are stunned." If they stay for any length of time, it is as owners, not tenants.

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JSC Lettings, 01344 845535
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12/PROPERTY



Celebrity squares

Handpainted ceramic tiles are beautiful, fashionable – and often expensive.
Rosalind Russell looks at a novel way to add luxury to a kitchen or bathroom

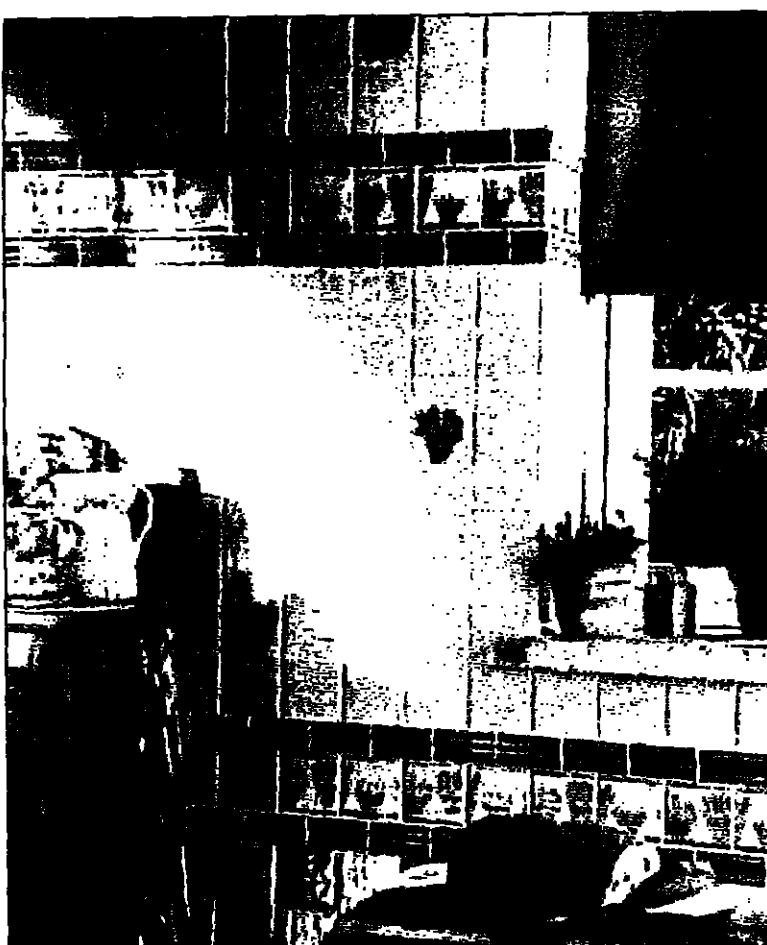
DAVID BOWIE has them. So does Roger Daltrey, Sally Burton and Robert de Niro. The Sultan of Brunei has them in his shooting lodge in Scotland. What are they? Hand-painted decorative wall tiles. In fact all these celebs bought them from Paris Ceramics, the company owned and run by Charlie Smallbone, the original founder of Smallbone Kitchens.

The kind of tiles we are talking about here cost the equivalent of a piece of art. Which is almost what they are, as they are designed and painted by the firm's own artists. A 54-tile panel of tiles called the Chef's Alphabet – which takes in everything from Artichoke to Zucchini, by way of K for Kipper – costs £865, including the tile border. That's an expensive splashback in anybody's recipe book, but it makes a striking centrepiece in a keen cook's kitchen. You can always buy them one at a time at £23 each and put in requests to friends and family at birthdays and Christmas.

A Seawater Fish panel of 35 tiles costs £900, or you can invest in just one of the five (haddock, plaice, lobster, bass or mackerel) which cover between six and eight tiles, from £180.

At that price you would have to be very sure you weren't going to move house for a few years, although estate agents do tell of tight-fisted clients prising tiles from the bathroom walls and carrying them off with the cutlery and curtains.

A new series by Paris Ceramics is the Adam cups, inspired by the work of Robert Adam. Neo-classical in design and five by five inches in size, they are painted in the soft Georgian colours of blue, green and



gold and feature swags, festoons, griffins and goddesses. Each tile costs £45; to buy the panel of 12, including matching relief border tiles, costs £507.

Even a small panel of expensive non-mass-produced tiles in a room can be enough to boost the rest of the look. World's End Tiles, which recently extended its Battersea

showroom, holds over 5000 different designs, which should be enough to cover most tastes. But people are moving towards lustre, matt white and modern metallic finishes, says the company's Alex Portelli.

Although it is the only commercial tile manufacturer in London, World's End also imports ranges



On the tiles...
Chef's Alphabet (top) by Paris Ceramics, Sherborne (left), from H&R Johnson's new Cotswold collection and Part of World's End's new Zillig Collection (above)

etched with his trademark greyhound, the tiles are backed in grey, blue or white, giving them depth.

"Each movement of the greyhound as it runs on each square is different, giving the effect of an old-fashioned flick book," says Portelli. "But of course you have to like dogs..." The greyhound tiles cost £17.04 each.

The firm has also just launched the Zillig range, inspired by the mosaic and boiserie of the North African Berbers. The tiles come in six sun-bleached and wind-weathered colours: antique white, yellow, aqua-green, blue, manganese and earth red. Prices start at £37 per square metre. As a final bonus, World's End's showroom includes a coffee bar and a crèche.

A handmade lookalike tile at a much cheaper cost is made by Stoke-on-Trent ceramic tile makers H&R Johnson (more popularly known under the Cristal brand name). Their new Cotswold collection has six different surface textures with deliberate colour variations.

There's a note on the box advising buyers not to try to even up the ones with the same finish on the wall, or the effect will be ruined.

The designs are all named after places in the Cotswolds, including Fairford; that design is based on the stained glass window in the medieval church. The Sherbourne is patterned with bows of spring flowers such as hyacinths and tulips. A box of 25 plain tiles costs £6.99; the Sherbourne decorative tiles, with eight in a pack, is £12.45.

Paris Ceramics 0171-371 7778 or in Harrogate 01423 523 877; World's End Tiles 0171-819 2100; H&R Johnson 01782 575575

THREE TO VIEW

NEWLY BUILT HOMES



NO REDECORATING or window replacement to worry about with a brand new house like this one in Bodham, in a small development between Holt and Sheringham in Norfolk. The four-bedroom brick and flint house has sealed unit double glazing, an open fireplace in the sitting room and a 23ft kitchen already

fitted with units, gas hob and oven. There's a separate utility room with plumbing for a washing machine. Upstairs there is a shower room and family bathroom and outside there's a double garage with power and light. Nothing to do but walk in. £119,000 through G.A. (01603 629211).



WHY BUY a decrepit old barn in France when you could have a brand new house in Deauville in Normandy? Originally marketed for French buyers, the development at Le Domaine de Clairefontaine attracted so many British passers by, it was decided to sell them here as well. Nine hundred metres from the beach and town centre – and

200kms from Paris – the flats and houses are surrounded by wooded grounds and have a communal swimming pool and two tennis courts. There will be a resident caretaker. Prices start at £47,000 for a one-bed flat, up to £35,000 – £120,000 for a four bedroom house. A Place In France (01705 832949).



GREENWOOD HOUSE near Yarmouth, on the Isle of Wight, is a recently built six-bedroom house overlooking the Solent. The four-storey house stands in six acres of grounds including formal walled terraces and has planning permission for a stable block. On

the lower ground floor there is a games room, sauna, bar, wine store and gun room. The attic floor is for guests, with sitting room, bedroom, bathroom and kitchenette. £395,000 through John D Wood (01590 677233).

It's brand new, but is it necessarily better?

FOR THE privilege of obtaining pristine new homes, buyers generally pay a premium – usually between 5 and 15 per cent more than the price of second-hand properties. What exactly does the extra money buy? And what is the pay-off when the homeowner sells?

New homes vary considerably in quality and value according to the developer, contractor, incentives and various market forces.

By definition, and whether in 1998 or 1978, by and large they mean less maintenance and making good the mistakes and omissions of previous owners. But the best of today's new builds go beyond technological advances to satisfy owners to a degree that is probably unprecedented. Appliances will not only be new but are likely to be built in. Most homeowners will be able to select in advance things such as the colour and quality of carpets and tiles, and the placement of some interior walls.

Whether urban or suburban, new

homes offer high levels of security, which also means that roads on new estates are planned to be safer for children, according to Colin Gabb, managing director of Bryant Homes South.

Developers didn't always listen so attentively to customers. Why the change? "The first day of the last recession forced developers to rethink their product, to give value for money," says Paul Vallone, sales and marketing director for Berkeley. To meet customer expectations, builders such as Laing and Bryant imported ideas from elsewhere, notably America.

The Yankee influence is immediately evident in Laing homes in Cuffley, Hertfordshire, which boast enormous basement rooms. Laing, Bryant and a few other developers also build "bonus rooms" – rooms in the loft space. Such refinements increase the property's value for developer and homeowner alike.

But already poor-quality conversions and waterside properties have appeared, built by developers out to

Developers offer a variety of temptations to be the first owner of a newly-built home, but you will often pay a premium price. Assess each deal on its merits, says Robert Liebman

make a quick trendy buck. "By and large new houses have pinched rooms, smaller and lower than older properties. They are not built very well," says Malcolm Hollis, a chartered surveyor who advised Granada TV on the recent *Builders from Hell* programme.

A builder can be merely unscrupulous rather than downright diabolical to cause misery. Five years after Helen and James bought their new home on an estate in the North, Helen is still annoyed that they can't extend the garage and build a bedroom over the extension. "Our surveyor found that the houses were too near one another and our builder had laid the pipes too near

the surface. We wasted £800 on plans and a survey."

This builder was conserving space. Many contractors indulge in what Mr Hollis calls "spec-saving" – using cheaper, inferior products than were agreed on.

Some new cars are lemons, and all new cars plummet in value the moment they leave the showroom. Similarly with homes, but owners of new properties have the extra worry that, if you are on an estate where other homes are still being built, your short-term value drops even further.

When the dust literally settles, your one-careful-owner home enters the lists like any other second-hand property. "Once you've lived in it,

then obviously for the next buyer it's no longer new, but the fundamental point is that its price will still be rising. The depreciation depends on local conditions and is likely to be overwhelmed by the fact that prices are rising in any case," says Paul Sanderson, Nationwide's head of research.

According to Halifax statistics, prices for existing homes have steadily inched up over the last year, whereas average prices for new houses were all over the place. In May 1997 they declined 2 per cent, but last May they rose 11.7 per cent. This seemingly magnificent leap is meaningless. The monthly statistical sample for new homes in

particular is small, volatile and unreliable.

"The normal pattern is for new houses to be between 5 and 15 per cent above the price for existing houses," says Gary Marsh, head of group corporate affairs for Halifax. "When times are problematical, builders cut their prices to get the cash flow going. The gap now is very narrow, so over the next year or two expect new house prices to rise by slightly more than existing houses to restore those more normal differentials."

What does this mean for someone today choosing between two hypothetically equal houses – one new, one second-hand – and wondering about the prices each might command five or fifteen years from now?

"I honestly don't think you could say that one would be better than the other. The movement in percentages would be so close as to be indistinguishable," Mr Marsh concludes.

Nationwide's Mr Sanderson concurs: "More important than the

statistics are the specifics for any particular housebuyer: the local factors, such as the actual position of new developments, and the schools, roads and shops. Many of these factors determine the price performance of any one area."

"Quite often the differences between areas in the same region can be greater than between two regions. Local conditions really dominate," he adds.

From another quarter, Richard Cotton emphasises differences between developers who build to different qualities. "We can identify who we would, and who we would not, buy from," he says. Mr Cotton is a partner at Clintons Daniel Smith in charge of their London residential agency.

Ordinary buyers can also decide who to buy from. Mr Hollis says: "If I were buying a new home, I would ask others already on the estate about their homes. If I were the first, I would spend whatever was required on surveys and inspections to obtain reliable information."